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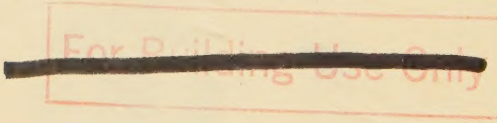

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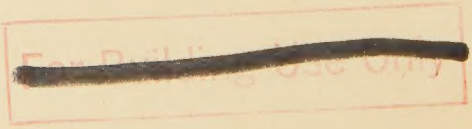

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VOLUME 36

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THE RALEIGH REGISTER 1799-1863

By

ROBERT NEAL ELLIOTT, JR.

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THE RALEIGH REGISTER
1799-1863

By

ROBERT NEAL ELLIOTT, JR.

CHAPEL HILL

*

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1955

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PREFACE

This is the story of the Raleigh *Register*. Begun in the new capital city of North Carolina in the fall of 1799 by an emigrant printer, the *Register* rose to become the most influential newspaper in the state during the ante-bellum period. Under the direction of its founder Joseph Gales, and later under his son Weston, the *Register* set the tone for a large segment of the state press for nearly fifty years. Passing into the youthful hands of a third Gales at the moment when the spoils of the Mexican War were beginning to poison the union, the *Register* wavered, lost its hold, and slipped downward. In 1856 it was sold to an outsider, John Syme, and seven years later it was removed to Petersburg, Virginia, where it continued as the Petersburg *Register*.

The *Register* in its sixty-four years witnessed many changes and recorded many vicissitudes. The reader of its files enters into the sympathies, interests, and impulses of the people; touches first hand the intellectual baggage of the past. He feels the temper of the times and shares the heated debate over principles and issues. He becomes, as it were, a part of the community of other times, a participant in antiquity rejoicing in the successful progress of a favored issue or decrying the failure of a bitter campaign. The important parts of local and national history become an everyday experience.

The *Register* was founded to combat Federalism in North Carolina. Its editor Joseph Gales proved a wise choice. Forced to leave his native England because of active participation in the Constitutional Reform Movement convulsing that land in the 1780's, he brought to North Carolina all the zeal and experience of a crusading editor. With the success of Republicanism in North Carolina and the nation, Gales made his paper the leading advocate of Jeffersonian principles in the state. He became one of Raleigh's leading citizens, serving as mayor and active promoter of nearly every benevolent and civic organization in the town. Following the War of 1812, when for a few years the spirit of nationalism was in the ascendancy, Gales embraced the American System of Henry Clay and other young Republicans, and the *Register* became a staunch supporter of their principles. This support aided greatly in laying the foundations for the Whig party in North Carolina.

In 1833 Joseph Gales retired from the *Register* and left the paper in the hands of his son Weston, who had been associate editor since 1822. It was during the tenure of Weston Gales that the *Register* became the leader of the press of North Carolina and one of the outstanding Whig

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papers in the South. Weston was a forceful writer, a conscientious editor, and a bitter partisan. Beginning in 1836 the Whigs controlled the state government for fourteen years, adopted a progressive program of internal improvements, made the beginnings of a system of public education, and instituted various humanitarian reforms. In the forefront, supplying publicity and organizing campaigns, was Gales and his *Register.*

How does an editor decide which party is right? This question was answered by Weston Gales in the *Register* of September 16, 1834, the year when various elements of anti-Jacksonians were forming into the Whig party: Let the editor "follow his own ideas of right and wrong, persevere in the honest discharge of his duty, and remain contented with the favorable judgement of candid men, and the approbation of his own mind." Gales, then, believed that the Whig party was right and the Democratic party wrong. Why? Conservative and representative of wealth, Gales felt that government should be reserved to the well born and well educated. Any intrusion of the masses into public affairs was dangerous and usually disastrous. For this reason he looked upon Jackson, as did the elder Gales, as an evil influence upon the country with his government for party's sake. Yet Gales would not brook the slightest abridgement of liberty for the people. If it was the right of the well born and educated to govern, it was their duty to protect the rights of the people; and the best security for liberty, Gales thought, was a free press. So long as this instrument was true to itself the liberties of the people were insured. But to keep it true was the joint responsibility of the conductors of the press and the people.

In 1848 Weston Gales died suddenly and his son Seaton succeeded him and edited the *Register* until 1856. Seaton was a mere boy when he succeeded his father, inexperienced and with no background for the task. But it is unlikely that a skilled editor could have done better. The Whig party was declining; the controversy over slavery was tearing at the bonds of union which joined the states. Seaton Gales steered a moderate course, searching for a national party, relying on compromise to soothe the troubled seas—no helmsman could have succeeded on such a course. The *Register* in the 1850's reflects the breaking up of the nation; its columns mirror the emotional content of the times.

To review all the news and editorial opinion in the *Register* would be to catalogue the history of the state and nation from 1799 to 1863. Such a chronicle would be tedious beyond reason. The aim of this study has been to select those episodes which are most important in illuminating the *Register's* history and indicating its relation to the developments of the time. Discussion has been restricted almost wholly to the *Register,* with only enough of the general history of the period to provide a narrative. The full story of journalism and the respective party

presses is told elsewhere and it is believed that a complete picture of newspaper opinion on various issues would be crowding the canvas too full. Where opposing newspaper comment is given it is for the sake of perspective and color.

The files of the Raleigh *Register* are not complete in any one depository, but by combining the files in the libraries of the University of North Carolina, Duke University, and the North Carolina State Library almost a full run is available; only the year 1833 is scant. Expressions of gratitude are extended to the staffs of these libraries for their cooperation and assistance.

This study was conducted under the direction of Professor Fletcher M. Green of the University of North Carolina and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History at that institution. To Professor Green I am deeply indebted, for without his sure hand to guide me through the tortuous maze of history's ways the path would have been exceedingly rocky. On those occasions when I did stray the responsibility, of course, lies with me.

My wife has been a constant inspiration and to her, in no small measure, this work is dedicated.

Robert N. Elliott, Jr.

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THE RALEIGH REGISTER

1799-1863

CHAPTER I

FROM SHEFFIELD TO RALEIGH

On October 22, 1799, there appeared in Raleigh, North Carolina, a weekly newspaper titled Raleigh *Register, and North-Carolina Weekly Advertiser.* It was a small four page paper, measuring over-all 11¾ by 19¼ inches, much like many other newspapers then published in the small towns of the United States. Each of the pages bore five two-inch columns, tightly packed with news gleaned from other newspapers, usually those of the larger towns and port cities—New York, Boston, Richmond, and Philadelphia. On the front page of this newspaper, occupying the leading position in the first column, the new editor saluted his readers. He hoped that this first product of his labors would be favorably received, and promised to make the paper interesting to every class of reader, particularly so when the General Assembly and Congress convened. The greeting closed with an invitation to become a subscriber at $3 a year. The imprint at the bottom of the back page revealed that the *Register* was printed in Raleigh by Joseph Gales, "Near the Court-House."

The *Register* as a newspaper was no novelty either to the citizens of Raleigh or to the people of North Carolina. At this time six newspapers were being published in as many towns within the state,[1] while those from other states, especially Virginia and South Carolina, circulated freely. And in May, five months earlier, Abraham Hodge and his nephew William Boylan had removed their *North-Carolina Minerva* from Fayetteville to Raleigh, hoping thereby to gain the favor of the General Assembly when it awarded the state printing contract, since the Assembly had adopted a law requiring the state printer to reside in the capital city.[2] Consequently, a reader scanning the first issue of the *Register* might have found little that would attract him to buy a subscription, since he was likely taking a newspaper to which he had become accustomed, that is, providing his interests were of a non-partisan character.

Beneath a plain yet attractive title, the front page of the *Register* bore a quaint motto, which to the naïve might seem a worthy promise

[1] These newspapers were: Edenton *Herald of Freedom,* Halifax *North-Carolina Journal,* Newbern *Gazette,* Raleigh *North-Carolina Minerva,* Salisbury *North-Carolina Mercury,* and Wilmington *Gazette.*

[2] Delbert Harold Gilpatrick, *Jeffersonian Democracy in North Carolina, 1789-1816* (New York, 1931), pp. 105-106.

but to a politically tempered voter of 1799 more probably an empty platitude. It was set in two lines of small type: "Our's are the plans of fair delightful Peace, Unwarp'd by Party Rage to live like Brothers!" Besides the salute from the editor and an advertisement from a printer in Petersburg, Virginia, this page contained a survey of news from the capitals of Europe, with attention focused upon the war raging there. This foreign news continued over onto the next page. At the top of column five, on page two, there was an advertisement signed by the editor announcing the opening of a book and stationery store. A list of merchandise available included, in addition to books and stationery supplies, such non-literary staples as medicines and razors. Then, in the same column under a bit of decoration setting off the headline "Raleigh," was an explanation of why this newspaper had appeared on the doorstep of Raleigh citizens that Tuesday morning: "The first number of the Register will be delivered to the citizens of Raleigh generally—future numbers will be sent to subscribers only."

The Raleigh column reported that Governor William R. Davie, recently appointed a commissioner to France, had held a conference with Benjamin Smith, speaker of the senate of the late Assembly, concerning Smith's assuming the duties of the governor during Davie's absence; a course, explained Editor Gales, in accord with constitutional provision. The column further related that the county court, at its last meeting, had appropriated funds for the construction of a market house to be built on the corner of Fayetteville and Hargett streets, a move certain to benefit both the farmers and townspeople of Wake County, Gales commented.

Page three, except for a portion of the last column which was reserved for marriage and death notices, was given over entirely to a summary of general news, foreign and domestic. Here a discerning reader might have noticed that an undue amount of space was devoted to accounts of prosecutions under the existing Alien and Sedition laws, and, moreover, that the accounts seemed to be slanted in opposition to these laws. On the last page there was a poem and a number of brief essays, one of which was titled "Ought the Freedom of Enquiry be Restricted." In it the author suggested that freedom itself would be undermined by such restraint. The essays, like the bulk of the matter in the paper, were credited to other journals.

Yet, if the casual reader of this new paper failed to recognize its worth, others, with ears carefully tuned to political matters, greeted the appearance of the *Register* with satisfied rejoicing; while still others regarded it with indignant wrath. North Carolina, among the four most populous states in the union, was an important factor in the political aspirations of Thomas Jefferson and the anti-administration men then laying plans for the presidential election of 1800. In 1798 the Federalists

had made decided gains in the state elections of North Carolina. An explanation given by the Republicans for this turn of events was the absence of a Republican press within the state. The newspapers then in circulation, led by the *Minerva,* were either independent or strongly Federalist. Thus, with the crucial election of 1800 coming up, Republican leaders of North Carolina, determined to correct this deficiency, began to look for an editor.[3] They found him in Philadelphia.

Joseph Gales came to Philadelphia in 1795, a refugee from his native England. He was born in Eckington, England, February 4, 1761, the son of a village artisan.[4] He attended the village school until he was thirteen when he was sent to Manchester to live with a former steward of the local rector. This man divided his time between serving as steward to the rector of that town and operating a leather business. Gales was engaged in the service of the parson in addition to taking care of the steward's correspondence. Of this he soon tired. Answering an advertisement for an apprentice, Gales, with the help of the steward, secured employment with Prescott's Book and Stationery Store, a Manchester printing firm. He was bound for seven years to learn the printing and bookbinding trade.[5]

It soon became apparent to Gales that his position in the Prescott firm was unsatisfactory. Instead of working at the type cases and helping in the shop, he put in most of his time clerking in the store. But worse than this, Prescott's wife took a dislike to the young apprentice and made conditions for him unbearable. After serving three years, Gales in desperation appealed to his relatives for help. The matter was brought before court and the indenture cancelled.[6]

Gales was now approaching eighteen. A neighbor introduced him to J. Tomlinson, a printer and bookseller living in Newark. He agreed to take Gales for the remainder of his indenture. Here Gales remained for six years, completing his apprenticeship and working for two years as a journeyman.

A frequent visitor to the Newark bookshop where Gales sometimes worked was Miss Winifred Marshall, a young lady of good family in Newark. Well read and a gifted writer, Miss Marshall was also possessed of good looks. It was not long before she and Gales had become fast friends. This ripened into love and on May 4, 1784, they were

[3] Gilpatrick, *Jeffersonian Democracy in North Carolina, 1789-1816,* pp. 104-105; William E. Dodd, *The Life of Nathaniel Macon* (Raleigh, 1903), pp. 158-159; Willis G. Briggs, "Joseph Gales, Editor of Raleigh's First Newspaper," *The North Carolina Booklet,* XIX (Raleigh, 1907), 116-117; Clement Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," *The Journal of Southern History,* X (November, 1947), 463.

[4] Winifred and Joseph Gales, Gales Reminiscences, MS. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, p. 136. Hereinafter cited Gales Reminiscences.

[5] Gales Reminiscences, p. 196.

[6] *Ibid.,* pp. 196-200.

married in the local church. Just before this Gales had decided to enter business for himself. A location was found in nearby Sheffield and with money he had saved, the small dowry of his betrothed, and credit, he established himself as a printer, bookseller, and stationer. Here, to modest quarters, he brought his bride.[7]

Before completing his training at Newark, Gales had become interested in the constitutional reform movement then beginning in England. This interest continued and after marriage Winifred Gales embraced her husband's sentiments with enthusiasm. Sheffield, an important manufacturing town in northern England, became one of the centers in this reform movement. Like many other large towns, Sheffield was unrepresented in Parliament. But unlike some of them, it had a large class of well paid intelligent mechanics who took a keen interest in political matters. Thus the works of Thomas Paine, Henry Redhead Yorke, and other political pamphleteers then writing on political reform, found a ready market; and Gales, as bookseller as well as a partisan, kept his stock up-to-date.[8]

Sheffield also included a large number of religious dissenters. The Duke of Norfolk, who was lord of the manor, and his family were Catholics. But few of the town's citizens followed their lord. Most of these were Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Unitarians. In the last two groups Gales found most of his friends. Furthermore, nearly all of these dissenting groups were liberals in politics. With his studious mind and interest in reform, Gales found the Unitarian faith more to his inclination. As in politics, Winifred Gales followed her husband in his choice of religious faith and they both became ardent Unitarians.[9]

Sheffield had but one newspaper, the Sheffield *Public Advertiser*. Indifferent in tone, it did little more than publish patent medicine advertisements and public notices. With the growth of the town into an important industrial center and the developing interest in political reform, there was need for a more vigorous vehicle for disseminating the ideas then current. This need was filled by Joseph Gales when on June 8, 1787, he began the Sheffield *Register;* he compared it to a reservoir of water which draws its source from nature "and distributes its fertilising stream to supply the surrounding country."[10] The *Register* quickly rose to the position of the most popular paper in Sheffield. All of Gales' sympathies for reform found expression within the columns of his paper. He took a firm but moderate stand on the question of parliamentary

[7] Gales Reminiscences, p. 27.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-33; Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," *loc. cit.*, p. 462.

[9] Gales Reminiscences, p. 33.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 28; see also W. H. G. Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, XXVIII (July, 1951), 334.

reform, and his paper was the only one that expressed views on political questions. Besides, Gales supplied his readers with news, articles of popular interest, and stories on science and literature. Within a short time the *Register* was widely read. Many of the shops in and around Sheffield clubbed to buy a subscription, and Gales estimated that the *Register* reached at least ten thousand readers weekly.[11]

A disagreement between the journeyman cutlers and the master cutlers in Sheffield, aggravated by the successful enclosure of much of the land around Sheffield by the Duke of Norfolk in 1791, presented Gales with an issue for his *Register*. The first news of the act of enclosure was read in the *Register* when a notice appeared that commissioners would hear appeals against the enclosure.[12] Stung to action, the people in a body protested to the Duke's agent and the local vicar. These two, foreseeing possible trouble, wrote to London, reporting that disorderly groups had interfered with the commissioners as they attempted to mark the boundaries of the enclosures. The result was military aid, but it failed to arrive before a mob had attacked the vicar's house, destroying much of it by fire.[13] Gales, in the *Register,* did not openly sympathize with the people, nor could he afford to; but he did report the events, giving their cause and, in general, slanting the news to favor the people and their grievances. Furthermore, he printed extracts from the works of Dr. Joseph Priestly and James Mackintosh, two advanced thinkers with ideas sympathetic to the cause of equality and reform.[14]

Shortly before this Thomas Paine, seeking to promote an iron bridge he had invented, came to the town of Masborough, near Sheffield, where was located a prominent iron founding firm. At the same time Paine was publishing his *Rights of Man.* Gales welcomed such a "radical luminary" and in 1790 the columns of the *Register* began to glow with "sympathetic quotation" in favor of *Rights of Man.*[15] To augment Paine's thesis, the outbreak of the French Revolution provided Gales with copy on the rights of men. This news he tied in with the government's opposition to schools for the common people, a cause espoused by the *Register* at this time. Also, Gales printed a cheap edition of the *Rights of Man* for which he found a ready market.[16]

To aid the cause to which Gales had dedicated the *Register,* he assisted in 1791 in forming the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information. But the time was not propitious for such an organization,

[11] Gales Reminiscences, p. 32.
[12] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 338.
[13] *Ibid.* [14] *Ibid.*
[15] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 340.
[16] Gales Reminiscences, p. 40; Armytage, "The Editoral Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* pp. 339-340.

though a statement in the *Register* declared its purpose was "towards restoring, by a peaceable Reform, a more equal Representation in the House of Commons . . . ." The riots and other outbreaks prompted by the enclosures had focused the attention of the authorities upon Sheffield. In spite of this surveillance, or because of it, the Society grew. Gales began a second journal, *The Patriot,* to bring within reach of the "body of the people" the works of eminent writers on political matters.[17] It was edited by a former barber. One month before the *Patriot* was published soldiers entered Sheffield and in May, the month following the *Patriot's* appearance, authorities issued a proclamation forbidding seditious writings.[18]

By printing for the working class, supporting their grievances, and championing their causes in the *Register,* Gales had obtained the confidence of the laborers of Sheffield. The authorities began to look upon him with suspicion. Many of his friends, booksellers and printers, were arrested, some for selling seditious matter, others for printing pamphlets objectionable to the Crown.[19] Then the outbreak of war with France made sympathy for France treasonable. Meanwhile, the Society for Constitutional Information, at a public meeting presided over by Gales, resolved to petition Parliament for reform. This petition was placed in Gales' office, and the *Register* urged the people to affix their signatures to it. After two weeks, the petition, bearing eight thousand names, was sent to the House of Commons where, following brief debate, it was rejected.[20]

The opposition to Gales and the Society was intensified with the appearance in Sheffield of a rival paper. The Sheffield *Courant,* "animated by the principles of 'Church and King,' " at once launched an attack on Gales. The *Register* was labeled seditious and Gales was charged "with aiming, not at *reforming,* but *subverting* and *destroying* the constitution."[21] The *Register* struck back by printing parodies on the war, unpopular with many of Gales' friends, and on the "heresy hunt" being waged so relentlessly by the King's Men. These arrests for treason were particularly disturbing to Gales, for many of the victims of treason trials were guilty of doing no more than Gales himself was doing.

But Gales, undaunted, continued his work for reform. The *Register* was prospering, reaching a circulation of 1,468 copies each week in 1793. Together with a young reformer, Henry Redhead Yorke, Gales

[17] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 341.

[18] Gales Reminiscences, p. 36; Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 343.

[19] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 40-41.

[20] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 347.

[21] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.,* p. 348.

resolved in the winter of 1793-1794 to supply more material for the partisan fires raging in Sheffield. A digest of Locke's *Treatise on Civil Government* was prepared, along with other pamphlets drawn from past political thinkers now clothed with some degree of respectability. Thus when much of England had been silenced, Sheffield had become the "storm center of the north."[22]

Meanwhile, Gales received warning that his movements were being closely watched by the authorities. An American visiting the Duke of Norfolk in Sheffield had become an acquaintance of Gales. On one occasion, shortly after the works of Paine had been suppressed, he had warned Mrs. Gales, who kept the book store, to conceal any copies of Paine's books that might be on the premises. Not long afterward, the authorities appeared and searched the place; on finding none of the forbidden books they left.[23] On another occasion, Gales intercepted a private letter from a prominent merchant of Sheffield which contained the news that more troops and an investigator were coming to Sheffield and that Gales was the man to whom they were to direct their attention.[24] Then on May 12, 1794, Thomas Hardy, secretary of the London Corresponding Society, the prominent cog in the reform movement, was arrested. Found among Hardy's papers were letters incriminating Gales.[25]

A short time before Hardy's arrest, Gales had hired a compositor, Richard Davison, who had belonged to the Leeds Society and on coming to Sheffield was appointed corresponding secretary of the Sheffield Constitutional Society.[26] In addition, Davison had some knowledge of weapons. Conditions in Sheffield had reached the stage where members of the reform movement thought it imperative to adopt means of defense against threatened attack. Gales arranged with a local cutler to make some specimens of a pike. These he showed to Davison and the latter wrote to Hardy asking whether the London Society would adopt "the same mode of *defence* which the friends of Reform in Sheffield meant to adopt."[27] It was this letter, printed on paper of "Gales Printing Office," that the authorities found among Hardy's papers.

As to whether the reform group at Sheffield really intended to use arms to resist efforts made to break up their society there is some doubt. One authority writes that Sheffield was the only instance of "arming in England" during this period.[28] Gales, however, denied any intention

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 355.
[23] Gales Reminiscences, p. 40.
[24] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 358.
[25] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 52-54; Armytage, "The Editorial Experiences of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 358.
[26] Gales Reminiscences, p. 52.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] P. A. Brown, *The French Revolution in English History*, quoted in Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 356.

other than defense and professed to know nothing of the letter written by his employee to Hardy.[29] Nonetheless, the Society held another public meeting at which a resolution declaring that "the People ought to demand as a right, not petition as a favour, for universal representation," was enthusiastically adopted.[30] This action furnished government agents with a pretext for arresting a number of the leaders in Sheffield and London. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended and news reached Sheffield that government agents were on their way to arrest Yorke, Gales, and other prominent leaders in the Sheffield Society.[31]

At the time this report reached Sheffield, Gales was away. Friends advised Mrs. Gales that it would be best if her husband would prolong his visit until the truth of the report was ascertained. A messenger was sent to warn him. Gales went into hiding at a nearby town where he continued to edit the *Register* with the help of Mrs. Gales and James Montgomery, a trusted employee later to achieve distinction as a poet of minor pretensions. The *Register* continued to thrive; its circulation exceeded two thousand.[32]

But it became increasingly apparent that Gales could no longer remain safely in England. A secret committee of the House of Commons investigating rumored conspiracies published its findings and Gales' part in the pike episode was revealed. Montgomery suggested that Gales leave for Holland and go from there to Hamburg. Once there he could await the outcome of the investigation. The Galeses had considered going to America before, and it was now decided that if Gales could not return safely to Sheffield he was to remain in Hamburg until his family could join him and then leave for America. Accordingly, necessary funds were provided and Gales took final leave of his native land.[33] On June 19, 1794, the last number of the *Patriot* was announced. One week later Gales' farewell editorial appeared in the *Register*. "It is in these persecuting days," he wrote, "a sufficient crime to have printed a newspaper which has boldly dared to doubt the infallibility of ministers, and to investigate the justice and policy of their measures." Seeing little to gain, either for himself or the cause of liberty, by imprisonment, Gales declared he would seek a livelihood in another state, a livelihood "which I cannot peaceably attain in this." He denied having written the letter found on Hardy but readily admitted his membership in the Constitutional Reform Society.[34]

[29] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 52-53.

[30] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 356.

[31] Gales Reminiscences, p. 54.

[32] Gales Reminiscences, p. 54; Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 360.

[33] Gales Reminiscences, p. 60.

[34] Briggs, "Joseph Gales, Editor of Raleigh's First Newspaper," *loc. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

Left behind in Sheffield, Winifred Gales carried on the business of printing and bookselling. There were four children, two boys and two girls, the oldest just eight, and another was on the way. The printing establishment had grown considerably, employing sixteen men. Managing this, with the newspaper and the bookshop, required full attention. Here, Mrs. Gales turned to James Montgomery.[35] Montgomery had joined the Gales firm in 1792 in response to an advertisement in the *Register* for a clerk "used to bookkeeping" and with "undeniable testimonials of character."[36] He was born in Scotland, the son of Moravian missionaries. Before answering Gales' advertisement, Montgomery had followed the muse for a number of years, producing a little poetry of insignificant merit. Both his parents were dead, victims of yellow fever in the West Indies where they were serving their church.[37] Of a personable nature and with sentiments congruous with those of Gales, Montgomery was accepted in the Gales household where he proved himself a trusted friend and loyal employee.

In addition to her concern over the business, Mrs. Gales was bothered by government authorities. Interference by the government was even more trying since her deportment would likely determine the safety of her property. Her first encounter was the arrival of government agents with a warrant for Gales. They behaved like gentlemen, Mrs. Gales wrote later, and on discovering that Gales was absent expressed pleasure.[38] Nevertheless, Mrs. Gales was later summoned before the local magistrate and closely questioned about the writing and printing of a pamphlet by Henry Redhead Yorke. Mrs. Gales denied knowledge of the pamphlet but admitted acquaintance with the author whom she regarded highly. It was only after an examination of the printers employed in the Gales firm, all of whom supported their mistress' testimony, that Mrs. Gales was dismissed.[39]

As soon as the news of Gales' flight became known many of his customers withheld money owed the firm. In vain did Mrs. Gales seek to collect money needed to meet obligations. Then two of Gales' creditors in London took out bankruptcy proceedings against the firm on the grounds that Mrs. Gales would be unable to settle matters satisfactorily. This meant that the property could not be sold—a severe blow, as the whole plan for going to America hinged on the disposal of the Sheffield business. Montgomery was sent to London. A successful appeal was made and Mrs. Gales was given full control of the property under the supervision of a board which she might name. Montgomery secured his

[35] Gales Reminiscences, p. 60.
[36] Armytage, "The Editorial Experience of Joseph Gales 1786-1794," *loc. cit.*, p. 343.
[37] Richard Garnett, "James Montgomery," *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXXVIII, 317-319.
[38] Gales Reminiscences, p. 58.
[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-69.

appointment as agent of the creditors. Friends of Gales and friends of the reform movement came forward with offers of money, while a delegation of workmen assumed for themselves the responsibility of protecting the Gales family from harm should the need arise. The printing office and the *Register* were offered for sale. One of the first offers came from an agent of the ministry who recognized the worth of a newspaper with so wide an influence. This offer was declined, though not without some spirit on the part of Mrs. Gales and a veiled threat from the agent. Then a local citizen proposed to buy the *Register* and printing office, retaining Montgomery as editor. This offer was accepted, and for £300 the *Register* passed into the hands of Montgomery and his partner. The name was changed to the *Iris*. The bookshop was left to Gales' three maiden sisters who continued to run it for many years.[40] Much of the spirit and fire with which Gales had endowed the *Register* was lost in the transfer to Montgomery and the *Iris*. Still the dying embers were enough to entangle the poet with the law, for he was arrested the next year, 1795, and imprisoned for a short time.[41]

With the affairs in Sheffield in order, Mrs. Gales made preparations to join her husband in Hamburg. In July, 1795, she, with her four children and a young orphan boy who had been apprenticed to Gales, took leave of Sheffield. Passage was arranged for Hamburg, and on the first day of September the family was again united.[42]

Gales had located in Altona, the principal city of the Duchy of Holstein, then under the protectorate of Denmark. Hamburg was a mile distant, a free city and the important trading port of northern Europe. The two towns were rivals; Altona had been founded by the Danes specifically to compete with the older port. Because of their location and political organization both towns were popular with refugees fleeing arbitrary governments.[43] As soon as his family arrived Gales made plans to leave for America. Passage was secured on a vessel leaving September 17, but once on board Mrs. Gales expressed misgivings. Not only was she the only woman passenger aboard, but the prospect of her accouchement, probably before the voyage was ended, colored her feelings. It was decided to return ashore and await a more favorable time. After some delay, partly due to inclement weather and partly to the reluctance of the captain to refund the passage money, the family returned to Altona.[44]

A furnished house was soon rented and the Galeses settled down in Altona. On November 17, Mrs. Gales was delivered of a daughter who in honor of their temporary home was named Altona Holstein Gales.

[40] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 40-41.
[41] Garnett, "James Montgomery," *loc. cit.*, p. 318.
[42] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 87, 96.
[43] Gales Reminiscences, p. 101.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 97; W. S. Powell, ed., "The Diary of Joseph Gales, 1794-1795," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, XXVI (July, 1949), 336-337.

Life in Altona was not unpleasant for the Galeses despite a shortage of money and an unusually severe winter. Among the many refugees, especially the emigres from France, they found congenial friends. Joel Barlow, the American poet and diplomat, was in Hamburg and he and Gales found a common interest in their admiration of Thomas Paine. Gales frequently went to Hamburg to read the English papers found in the city "news-room." His leisure was devoted to learning to read and write both German and French; meanwhile, he practiced the art of shorthand which had been introduced to him by an itinerant teacher whom he had befriended in Sheffield.[45]

Thus the months wore on. Gales was anxious to hear from England, but for sixteen weeks the Elbe was frozen over, cutting off all communication. Then in March a letter arrived, and the friends in Sheffield expressed the hope that Gales might return. He was, of course, more than willing, but there still remained the question of his safety. Gales wrote back requesting an opinion. The returning answer discouraged any further hopes of going back to Sheffield. But to soften the blow his friends included a sum of money which had been raised, partly as a loan and partly as a gift. In addition, Gales was assured that if he would order type and supplies from London to be sent to America, his friends would cover their cost. These offers were gratefully received and preparations were begun for the voyage to America.[46]

With the help of Joel Barlow passage was secured on a ship bound for Philadelphia. On May 31, 1795, the family took leave of Altona. The apprentice boy, who had left Sheffield with Mrs. Gales, at the last moment decided to return to England.[47] The weather was delightful, and the passage of two months, though not without incident, was pleasant. It was on July 19, when the Galeses were about three hundred miles out from Philadelphia, that a British privateer hove into view and stopped their ship. For a moment the Galeses were greatly concerned. War raged between France and England and all British vessels were instructed to seize British artisans leaving their homeland. The Galeses posed as Americans, a guise soon penetrated by a sharp-eyed officer of the prize crew sent aboard. But Mrs. Gales rose to the occasion and so charmed the officer that not only did they release the ship but gave the Galeses some needed supplies. They continued on their way and July 30 docked at Philadelphia.[48]

Two immediate problems faced Gales. One was his wife's toe, the other a job. Before they left Altona, Mrs. Gales' toe had become infected, causing her much suffering on the way over. As soon as possible

[45] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 104-105; Powell, "The Diary of Joseph Gales, 1794-1795," *loc. cit.*, p. 339.

[46] Powell, "The Diary of Joseph Gales, 1794-1795," *loc. cit.*, p. 339.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

[48] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 123-130; Powell, "The Diary of Joseph Gales, 1794-1795," *loc. cit.*, p. 344.

a doctor was located. His remedy was simple; he pulled the toe nail out, an operation painful to Mrs. Gales but effective, as the toe soon healed. The printing materials ordered from London had not yet arrived, so Gales found employment as a journeyman with Claypool and Dunlop, publishers of the *American Daily Advertiser*. This reduced status distressed Mrs. Gales, but, aware of the need for the $10 weekly wage her husband received, she was soon reconciled.[49]

The *American Daily Advertiser* was America's first successful daily. As the *Pennsylvania Packet* it had been established by John Dunlop in 1771 and prospered from the start. Successively a weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly it was issued as a daily in 1784. Washington chose it to publish his Farewell Address in 1796.[50]

The Philadelphia to which Joseph Gales brought his family in 1795 was not the city of brotherly love as legend might have described it in earlier years. In addition to holding claim to the financial and literary center of the United States, Philadelphia was the young nation's capital. Moreover, concentrated there were perhaps the most vigorous as well as scurrilous examples of journalism seen in America. With party spirit high and political independence, for man or newspaper, practically unknown, the press in Philadelphia easily set the pace in the struggle between the Administration Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans. Heading the rival factions were John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States*, organ of the administration, and the *Aurora* edited by Benjamin Franklin Bache, grandson of the illustrious printer whose name he bore and strident spokesman for the Jeffersonian forces. Gales was not the only immigrant in this alien city; Philadelphia swarmed with refugees from England, France, and Germany, men for the most part from the middle class groups—artisans, writers, and printers. Dr. Joseph Priestly, Unitarian divine fleeing from the same government as Gales and for similar reasons, had settled near Philadelphia.[51] Gales had printed his works in *The Patriot* at Sheffield. Within a year William Cobbett, "Peter Porcupine," found expedient reasons for leaving England, and he came to Philadelphia where he opened a school to teach English to French emigres. Later the impact of this man was to be felt in the Republican ranks when in 1797 he began *Porcupine's Gazette*, a strongly Federalist paper.[52]

Such was the setting in which Joseph Gales was to begin a new life. His duties as a compositor on the *Daily Advertiser* were short-lived, for

[49] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 133-134; Powell, "The Diary of Joseph Gales, 1794-1795," *loc. cit.*, p. 345.

[50] Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York, 1947), pp. 88, 116, 117.

[51] Van Wyck Brooks, *The World of Washington Irving* (New York, 1944), p. 5.

[52] John A. Krout and Dixon R. Fox, *The Completion of Independence 1790-1830* (New York, 1944), pp. 51-52, 156-160.

it soon became known to his employers that their journeyman was a competent reporter. Congress was then in session and the *Daily Advertiser* was in need of a reporter to cover the debates. Gales was assigned to the Senate where his verbatim accounts of the speeches established his reputation as a reporter. Claypool and Dunlop raised his wages to $25 a week.[53] At the same time he attracted the attention of several prominent members of Congress.

The printing materials promised from London arrived the following spring and Gales, chaffing under the constraint of working for someone else, determined to have his own newspaper. He bought the semiweekly *Independent Gazetteer* from the widow of its founder Eleazer Oswald, a fiery editor of Revolutionary fame. Gales changed the title to *Gales' Independent Gazetteer* and issued the first number September 16, 1796.[54] The publication was successful and once again the family was comfortably fixed; the children attended the best schools available in Philadelphia.

In the political controversy current at the time, Gales allowed his natural inclinations to determine his choice of parties. Though the prospectus issued for the *Gazetteer* promised an impartial story of political events, with foreign news and general features, its spirit hinted strongly of a Republican bent. His sympathies were with France, and his democratic convictions, which had been revealed so often in the pages of the Sheffield *Register,* added a Republican luster to the columns of the *Gazetteer.* Stories against the slave trade and for a liberal immigration policy were prominent features.[55] Such a newspaper might easily have attracted the attention of political leaders anxious to secure a voice.

It was in the fall of 1796, the same year that the *Gazetteer* made its appearance, that the Galeses were introduced to that "dreadful scourge" yellow fever. As soon as Congress recessed the Galeses joined in the grand exodus from Philadelphia to the country. The next fall Gales sold his paper. His reasons for this act are not clear. Undoubtedly the regular visitation of the yellow fever discouraged him with Philadelphia.[56] Also, there was difficulty in collecting subscription debts, and it is possible that he might have anticipated some trouble with the government. His natural sympathies inclined him toward Jefferson and in the English-French struggle he leaned in favor of France. Moreover, he was an immigrant and immigrants came to be looked upon with official disfavor, especially immigrant editors.[57] Whatever the reason,

[53] Gales Reminiscences, p. 134.

[54] Gales Reminiscences, p. 134; Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820,* 2 vols. (Worcester, Mass., 1947), II, 910.

[55] Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," *loc. cit.,* p. 462; Briggs, "Joseph Gales, Editor of Raleigh's First Newspaper," *loc. cit.,* p. 115.

[56] Gales Reminiscences, p. 136; James M. Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1917), pp. 106-107.

[57] The Alien and Sedition Acts were passed in 1798. Dodd, *The Life of Nathaniel Macon,* pp. 157-158.

in November, 1797, Gales sold the *Gazetteer* to Samuel Harrison Smith, a young journalist whom he had taught shorthand. Smith was then publishing in Philadelphia a daily paper, *The New World,* with morning and evening editions.[58]

Gales continued his printing, doing work for a number of congressmen. The next year the family delayed going to the country when the yellow fever again visited Philadelphia and Mrs. Gales was stricken. She soon recovered and the family repaired to Bucks County where they remained until the scourge had run its course. Sometime after he returned to Philadelphia, members of the North Carolina delegation to Congress approached Gales and urged him to settle in Raleigh, the new capital of the state, holding out strong inducements, one of which was the state printing contract.[59] At this time there was no newspaper in Raleigh. Nathaniel Macon, recognizing in Gales the type of editor needed by the Republicans in North Carolina, urged him to establish a newspaper in Raleigh, promising the support of the party in the undertaking.[60] With the annual trial of yellow fever, the recent illness of his wife, and the difficulties facing immigrants in the political ebullition fermenting in Philadelphia, Gales, pleased with the idea, decided to look into the matter. The following spring, accompanied by Richard Stanford, the Republican representative from the district in which Raleigh was located, Gales made a trip to Raleigh. The party went overland and entered North Carolina through Caswell County. What Gales saw and heard pleased him, for he engaged a house and returned to Philadelphia for his family.[61]

There were now seven children, two daughters having been added since the family arrived in Philadelphia. It was decided to go by boat to Norfolk and then overland to Raleigh. On August 20, a kind circle of friends was again broken as the Galeses embarked on a schooner bound for Norfolk. They were out only twelve days, but the youngest daughter died soon after leaving Philadelphia and was buried at sea. At Norfolk a carriage was hired with some difficulty. With only a stop at Warrenton, the family reached Raleigh, September 4, 1799.[62]

The Galeses found Raleigh "a very pleasant community," though another visitor described it as a "town of magnificent distances . . . , and few inhabitants, and an *on welcome* look to newcomers."[63] A few houses clustered near the capitol square, and southward, along Fayette-

[58] Gales Reminiscences, p. 137; Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820,* II, 910.

[59] Gales Reminiscences, p. 137; Dodd, *The Life of Nathaniel Macon,* p. 158.

[60] Dodd, *The Life of Nathaniel Macon,* p. 158; Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," *loc. cit.,* p. 463.

[61] Gales Reminiscences, p. 138.

[62] *Ibid.,* p. 139.

[63] *Ibid.,* p. 140; Hope Chamberlain, *History of Wake County North Carolina* (Raleigh, N. C., 1922), p. 93.

ville Street, several blocks were dotted with small frame buildings—stores and homes. It was on this street that Gales had engaged a house. On their arrival the Galeses found the house still occupied by officers of the provisional army stationed in Raleigh. A temporary residence was taken nearby. By the time their furniture, supplies, and printing materials arrived the original house was vacant, and the Galeses moved in.[64] At once type was sorted, the press erected, and proposals for the Raleigh *Register* were printed; on October 22 the first number appeared and a new era in journalism had begun in North Carolina.

[64] Gales Reminiscences, p. 142.

CHAPTER II

JEFFERSON AND SUCCESS

The Register 1799-1815

"An adventurer from England . . . wafted to this state on the pinions of revenge and party spirit."[1] Thus did Charles W. Harris, prominent Federalist in North Carolina, characterize Joseph Gales. Gales was a radical, a deist, and a reformer who never tired of crusading for a cause which in his opinion could improve society. But above all Gales was a skilled editor, tactful yet persuading, and in his hands the *Register* became a potent force in shaping the politics and character of North Carolina. Of the many newspapers established in the state during the ante-bellum period, the Raleigh *Register* alone ran through the entire period. No little part in its success is attributed to the firm foundation given the paper by Joseph Gales.

The chief object of a newspaper in the early part of the nineteenth century was to serve the interests of a political party. Here was the beginning of that great era of party editors and personal journalism which led Hezekiah Niles to declare in his *Register* "that nearly every publisher is compelled to take a side in personal electioneering."[2] In this respect Joseph Gales was no exception. The *Register* was founded to promote the Republican party in North Carolina, and Gales used all the forces at his command to serve the party. However, this purpose did not blind him to other issues. Readers of the Raleigh *Register* learned soon that the established political and social order of North Carolina was lacking in a number of respects. Gales' editorial essays into social reform along with a word by word report of the important debates in the General Assembly—made possible by his knowledge of shorthand—gave the *Register* a distinctive position among North Carolina newspapers.

The editorial had not yet fully emerged as a department of the newspaper and the *Register* did not abound with editorials. More often the *Register's* leader was a brief comment on some local issue. Still, it was an opinion and usually in support of a firmly established principle. The *Register* was hardly a month old when Gales endorsed a medical society for North Carolina, arguing that standards were needed to suppress "the fatal and criminal practices of Quacks and Empyrics."[3] But

[1] Quoted in Gilpatrick, *Jeffersonian Democracy in North Carolina, 1789-1816,* p. 105.

[2] *Niles' Weekly Register,* XXVII (February 19, 1825), 286.

[3] Raleigh *Register,* November 12, 1799.

it was to education that Gales lent his most willing support. As a father with a desire to see his children properly educated and as an editor devoted to service in the community, Gales developed an early interest in schools. His son Joseph, Jr., was sent to the University at Chapel Hill the next summer after the arrival in North Carolina, and his daughter Sarah attended schools in Hillsboro and Salem.[4] Toward the University Gales evinced warm interest. In the *Register* of February 18, 1800, he congratulated the people of the state on possessing such an institution, and in later years was quick to defend the school from attacks.[5] In 1802 Gales donated a number of books to the University, and his wife was the leader of a group who presented the school with a set of globes.[6]

At the meeting of the General Assembly in November, 1801, a petition was presented from the people of Raleigh asking for state aid in establishing an academy in the town. Among the forty signers of this petition was Joseph Gales.[7] In the *Register* Gales showed great zeal for this undertaking. Education for him was a means of combating the rise of an aristocracy.[8] Toward libraries Gales showed the same interest. "Nothing can conduce so well a taste for learning and information as libraries," Gales remarked in the *Register,* March 3, 1808, when announcing the opening of a library at the Raleigh Academy; and when the service was extended to the citizens of Raleigh he noted that a library would go further "to improve the condition of society, than any other means that could be devised."[9]

The savage custom of dueling drew from Gales some of his most indignant comments. With each account in the *Register* of a fatal duel Gales expressed the hope "that this may be the last instance we shall have to record of this wanton, this more than savage" practice. The duel in which ex-Governor Richard Dobbs Spaight was killed by John Stanly provoked in the *Register* of September 13, 1802, a full column of details of the event and the opinion that dueling reflected on the humanity and policy of civilized nations. But the death of Alexander Hamilton following his duel with Aaron Burr in 1804 was the *Register's* big story on dueling. Gales devoted seven columns in the *Register* of July 30 to chronicle the details of this sad event. His leader referred to the duel as a "ferocious and unchristian practice."

From its beginning the Raleigh *Register* recorded what Gales thought were the chief errors of the administration of President John Adams. As a foreigner and in the light of his past experience it was not to be

[4] Gales Reminiscences, p. 143.
[5] Raleigh *Register,* September 29, 1806.
[6] *The North Carolina Minerva,* December 7, 1802; David Lowry Swain, *Early Times in Raleigh* (Raleigh, 1867), pp. 35-36.
[7] Charles L. Coon, ed., *The Beginnings of Public Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1908), I, 26.
[8] Raleigh *Register,* April 15, 1800; March 30, 1802; June 11, 1804.
[9] *Ibid.,* July 19, 1810.

expected that Gales would approve of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Beginning October 22, 1799, and continuing until the acts expired, the *Register* regularly contained accounts of prosecutions under these acts. At the same time all attempts to repeal the acts were given full coverage. The *Register* on June 10 noted that Justice Alfred Moore, a North Carolinian who succeeded James Iredell to the Supreme Court, failed at the June term in 1800 to charge the jury with the "necessity of carrying the Sedition Law into effect," and Gales commented that this was a sign of promise. The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions were printed without editorial approval, but James Madison's Report made in an effort to get Virginia to renew her protest, was printed separately as a pamphlet and advertised for sale by Gales. The obituary column, an innovation as a regular feature in North Carolina journalism, was frequently used by Gales to wage his fight against the Federalists. He never failed wherever possible to comment that the deceased had been a "firm and fixed Republican."[10]

Gales took a decided stand against Britain in the war raging in Europe; at one time he even commended John Adams for his determination not to be dictated to by "that haughty nation." In the *Register* of November 12, 1799, Gales pointed out that it was apparent that if Britain was successful against France the United States would be forced "to surrender up all their commerical privileges" or else defend them "at the point of a bayonet." Yet in spite of this bias against Britain, Gales wished the war would end. "The improvidence and havoc of war," he wrote on January 27, 1801, "have been succeeded by the miseries of famine and disease"; but he held little hope for peace. Gales regarded Napoleon Bonaparte's accession to power as an event too important to be dismissed with ordinary notice. In the *Register* of July 20, 1802, he traced the rise of Napoleon, pointing out that it had come about only after the destruction of liberty of the press and freedom of conscience and religious worship. Gales told his readers that Napoleon's assumption of power should not astonish the American people, but it may instruct them.

Gales had been invited to North Carolina to prepare the state for the presidential election of 1800, and it was toward accomplishing this aim that the *Register* was most effective. The rival paper, the *Minerva*, ably edited by William Boylan, was the *Register's* most formidable antagonist. With these two papers located in Raleigh, the state capital became the arena for a combat of partisan journalism that ended with the demise of the Federalist party and, with it, the *Minerva*. The *Minerva* denounced Jefferson as a demagogue, a man who cheats his neighbors and blasphemes his Savior, a "second-hand varnished Deist."[11]

[10] Raleigh *Register*, January 7, 14, February 18, 1800; October 13, 1801.
[11] *The North Carolina Minerva*, August 12, 1800.

Letters defending Jefferson's religion were printed in the *Register*[12] in answer to these charges, and an essay lauding Jefferson's statute for religious freedom in Virginia was made a prominent feature in the *Register* of July 29, 1800. On August 5, the *Register* ran a four column article, taken from the Kentucky *Gazette*, high in its praise of Jefferson's character. Beginning in the *Register* of September 23, and continuing for three successive issues, "Americanus" extolled the public life and character of Jefferson, vindicating him from the many charges made by the Federalists. In all of these articles taken from the anti-Adams press of the nation, Jefferson's theories of state rights, opposition to standing armies, strict construction of the constitution, antipathy to aristocratic tendencies in government, and his service in support thereof were made the chief points for defense of the Virginian.

Thus with selected news, attacks on the Adams administration, and editorials and letters borrowed from the leading Republican newspapers, the *Register* campaigned for Jefferson. The paper itself made no editorial comment, but this was due to the illness of Gales. In the early fall of 1800 Gales was stricken with a severe attack of typhus fever and for a time his life was despaired of, but Winifred Gales, aided by Richard Davison, Gales' only assistant on the *Register*, conducted the paper. Davison had assisted Gales on the Sheffield *Register*, and had been incriminated with him in the alleged pike episode[13] which led to Gales' departure from his native country. In 1802 Davison left the Raleigh *Register* and established at Warrenton a Republican paper, *The North Carolina Messenger*. Here he shared some of the abuse directed by William Boylan against Gales; Boylan labeled Davison the "sub-editor and toad-eater" to the editor of the *Register*.[14]

When the election of 1800 went to the House of Representatives, the *Register* reported the proceedings in detail. The editors commented that it was difficult to see why the Federalists voted for Burr instead of Jefferson, since both were opposition men, unless there was a desire to avoid any election and thus elevate the president pro tem of the Senate to the chief magistracy. They doubted the constitutionality of this and declared that any plan involving Burr was trifling "rather too far with public opinion."[15]

The *Register* of March 3, 1801, contained the news of Jefferson's election, but it was not given a leading place in the news column. The leader included an apology to the readers because the paper had no recent foreign news. There was however "a very important article of domestic intelligence"; Thomas Jefferson had been elected to the presidency.

[12] Raleigh *Register*, July 22, September 30, 1800.
[13] See above p. 9.
[14] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 143-145; *The North Carolina Minerva*, December 9, 1802.
[15] Raleigh *Register*, February 24, 1801.

The reader was referred to the "Congress head" for details of the balloting. It was reported that in Warren County, home of Nathaniel Macon, fifteen platoons had fired rifles to celebrate the event, "they having no cannon."[16] But with all its approval of Jefferson's victory, the *Register* cautioned against overdoing the event. When the next year it was noticed that Republicans in a number of places were set to observe the 4th of March in celebration of Jefferson's ascendancy to the presidency, Gales opposed a public celebration. Such an event however intended, he wrote, will only tend to widen the breach between the rival parties. He thought it would be wiser to endeavor "to convince their judgement, than to irritate their passions." Let the acts of the administration speak for themselves, he concluded; these will be understood by the people.[17]

Since the Republicans had been victorious, it now devolved on the *Register* to defend the party against attacks from the Federalists. Jefferson's religion, as in the campaign, provided a favorite theme. A number of Federalists in North Carolina deplored the decline of religion within the state, associating this with the spread of Republicanism.[18] Gales countered these charges by emphasizing Jefferson's crusades for religious freedom, arguing that this had advanced religion; Gales climaxed his defense in 1807 by publishing in the *Register* an address of appreciation to Jefferson from the Chowan Baptist Association of North Carolina acknowledging the President's part in furthering the cause of religious freedom.[19] Gales, however, had a personal reason for defending Jefferson's religious views. Like the President he was a deist. While in Philadelphia he took part in organizing the first Unitarian Society in that city and was a lay reader in the group. After coming to Raleigh Gales was an important figure in bringing Unitarianism to the South, opening the columns of the *Register* to the spreading of the doctrines of the faith. Moreover, the spirit of toleration was strong in Gales and this was reflected in the *Register,* notably in the support given to the church and academy in Raleigh. In the *Register* of February 11, 1800, Gales wrote: "If Education be the foundation, Religion is the key-stone which locks and cements, and beautifies the grand arch of Society. . . . Religion dignifies the Man and the Citizen."

In addition to making personal attacks on Jefferson, the *Minerva* denounced the Republican party for everything connected with Jefferson's administration. Thomas Paine, the Louisiana Purchase, the Embargo, and Joseph Gales were made the object of Boylan's journalistic acerbity. In turn, Gales stoutly defended the administration. The messages of Jefferson to Congress were printed with favorable comments in the editorial column. Letters from Thomas Paine were given prominent display, and the acts of the administration were greeted by the

[16] Raleigh *Register,* March 10, 1801. [17] *Ibid.,* March 1, 1802.
[18] Gilpatrick, *Jeffersonian Democracy in North Carolina. 1789-1816,* p. 122.
[19] Raleigh *Register,* June 4, 1807.

Register with warm support. On April 6, 1802, the *Register* reported a treaty entered into between France and Spain whereby Spain had yielded Louisiana to France. It was rumored, Gales observed, that the Isle of Orleans had been ceded to the United States. "Should this prove true," he continued, "the magnitude of the advantages from such an acquisition to our mercantile interests and political security, every man of discernment must perceive." Gales followed this story up with articles designed to acquaint his readers with the new country. When the treaty acquiring Louisiana was finally ratified, Gales hailed the act as an achievement that redounded to the Republican administration. "To the firm and temperate conduct of the Legislature," Gales wrote January 30, 1804, "to the enlightened and energetic measures of the Executive, and to the commanding and supporting sentiment of the Nation, we owe this splendid achievement." Aiming a barb at Boylan and the *Minerva,* Gales concluded, "Cold must be the heart that is not animated by the completion of this event."

The impeachment of Judge Samuel Chase attracted its share of attention in the Republican newspapers; Chase's arbitrary enforcement of the Sedition Laws was recalled with vengeance. The *Register* gave its readers as much of the news of the trial as it could accommodate, but Gales refrained from editorial comment until the trial was over. In the *Register* of March 25, 1805, he wrote: "The Judge . . . has not been convicted by a constitutional majority" but there was "an actual majority against him on three of the articles." Therefore, Gales tartly concluded, "The *Mercy* of our constitution," and not "the *common sense* of a majority of the Senate," declared the Judge innocent.

Always during this period, vying for space, was the war in Europe, and of special interest the affairs of Britain and America. Peace with Tripoli was greeted by the *Register* with satisfaction.[20] Summaries of the battles engaged in by Napoleon, the efforts of that Emperor to remake the political map of Europe—these were regularly chronicled by the *Register* with the arrival of every ship in American ports. But affairs with Britain were given preferential treatment. In the *Register* of February 10, 1806, Gales noted that the differences with Britain had begun to assume a serious aspect. He took his cue from a resolution presented to the House proposing a non-importation law against Britain to force that nation to cease impressment of American seamen. "Congress," Gales observed, "is much divided as to the proper steps to be taken." The *Register,* in company with most of the nation's press, resented the treatment of American seamen by British commanders anxious to staff their depleted crews. On several occasions Gales printed lists of American seamen who were seeking, with the aid of the State Department, to establish their identity.[21]

[20] Raleigh *Register,* September 23, 1805.
[21] *Ibid.,* November 4, 1805.

On July 2, 1807, the *Register* reported "the unexampled, premeditated outrage, committed by the *Leopard*, a British ship of war, upon the U. S. frigate *Chesapeake*." This affair, Gales stated, has acted like an "electric shock" on the people of the United States. He published accounts of public meetings held in the several towns with resolutions adopted and in subsequent issues of the *Register* gave the President's proclamation, accounts of patriotic exertions, and the British account of the affair prominent display.

Affairs steadily moved toward a reckoning with Britain. Commenting on Jefferson's message to Congress in the fall of 1807, Gales wrote that there seemed to be little spirit of conciliation in negotiations with "the arbitrary government of Britain." The President indicated in his message, Gales continued, a strong sense of injury not only for the *Leopard* affair but for the "wanton violation of [American] rights" in the impressment of American seamen by the British.[22] On December 31, the *Register* carried the story of the general embargo adopted by Congress. "This is a strong and decisive measure," Gales declared, "but we doubt not Congress had good cause for adopting it." The wisdom of the act was demonstrated three months later, Gales contended, when he reported the orders adopted by the British Council and the retaliatory decrees of Napoleon at Milan.[23]

Like other measures of the Jefferson administration, the embargo came under the wrath of the Federalists. Gales answered these attacks with reasoned argument. In the *Register* of June 23, 1808, he asserted that the United States had three alternatives: keep the embargo, resist the British and French blockade orders which involved war or capture, or go to war with either nation or both. The United States government, he declared, preferred to keep the property and citizens of the country at home. But the enemies of the government, and by these he meant the opponents of the embargo, "wish to remove the embargo that we may have war." Two months later, August 11, Gales reported that news from England indicated that the "stagnation of commerce" was being felt in the manufacturing centers of that country. He believed that before very much longer the British government would be forced to repeal the *"unwise* and *impolitic"* Orders in Council. But Gales was too sanguine, for in commenting on Jefferson's annual message in the November 17 *Register* he admitted it contained "unpleasant information with respect to England." Toward the conduct of the New England states Gales showed no sympathy. Their opposition to the embargo he termed rebellious; and he feared a civil war, "that greatest of all calamities," would be a consequence of their open defiance.[24] When it appeared that Congress might lift the embargo Gales assumed that Ameri-

[22] Raleigh *Register*, November 5, 1807.
[23] *Ibid.*, February 4, March 3, 1808.
[24] Raleigh *Register*, February 2, 1809.

can merchant vessels would be authorized to arm; this, he felt certain, would "lead to war, and all its unhappy consequences."[25]

By this time the Raleigh *Register* and Joseph Gales were firmly established in Raleigh. Through the efforts of Thomas Blount and other Republican leaders, the General Assembly of 1800 had awarded Gales the public printing contract. To indicate his official status, Gales altered the title of the *Register* November 25, to read Raleigh *Register, and North-Carolina State Gazette.* The printing contract gave Gales an income of around $1,200 with allowances for delivering the completed laws to the several counties.[26] Gales held the contract for the next ten years, though not without opposition from William Boylan, who offered to do the state printing for a lower sum, suggested that it be divided, and charged Gales with being tardy in performing the work. All the while he kept calling attention to Gales' foreign birth, criticizing his flight from England, and questioning his character.[27]

For the most part Gales chose to ignore the attacks made on him in the columns of the *Minerva,* but one series goaded him to a rebuttal. This grew out of a toast given by Gales at a Fourth of July celebration in Raleigh, when he toasted Jefferson as the author of the Declaration of Independence. Boylan in the *Minerva* corrected him, contending that the Declaration was produced by a committee, a fact Gales challenged him to prove.[28] The matter simmered until September when the *Minerva* ran a letter signed "A citizen of Johnston County" in which Gales was subjected to a bitter and rancorous attack; his foreign birth and conduct in England were singled out for savage denunciation. A friend of Gales, during the latter's absence, undertook to answer in the columns of the *Register,* characterizing the letter as a "scurilous abuse of an individual." On his return Gales refused to be further provoked; he declared he would not "stoop so low as to attempt any refutation to the wanton abuse . . . cast upon him in the last Minerva." If, he added, it was "criminal to have been born in England or to have exerted himself as an Editor . . . whilst living there, to obtain a reform of the corruptions of that government," then he would plead guilty.[29]

The climax came during the annual meeting of the General Assembly. A resolution was passed calling for a division of the state printing between Boylan and Gales, but was later rescinded. Then Boylan made an effort to gain the contract by offering to do the work for less than that paid Gales, but his offer failed to clear the committee to which it had been referred.[30] With his efforts to outbid Gales in gaining public favor

[25] *Ibid.,* February 16, 1809. [26] Raleigh *Star,* November 29, 1810.
[27] *The North Carolina Minerva,* December 7, 1802; July 18, 1803; November 12, 1804; Mary L. Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," *The North Carolina Historical Review,* XXI (July, 1944), 197-199.
[28] Raleigh *Register,* July 16, 1804.
[29] Raleigh *Register,* September 17, 1804.
[30] Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," *loc. cit.,* p. 198.

thus thwarted, Boylan vented his ire on his successful rival in the *Minerva.* He revealed himself to be the "Citizen of Johnston County" and circulated a handbill containing a summation of all his charges against Gales. Gales answered promptly with a handbill of his own calling Boylan "The cold-blooded assassinator of private character . . . that butcher of good names" and insinuating that Boylan was responsible for the fire which had destroyed the *Register's* printing office the previous February. The result of this acrimonious display was a fight between the two editors in which Gales was severely beaten. Undaunted, Gales sued Boylan for assault, and the following year the Superior Court meeting in Hillsboro awarded him £100 damages. Gales donated the sum, less legal fees, to the Raleigh Academy.[31]

An effort was made to reduce the salary of the public printer in 1809, but it was defeated in the General Assembly. Proponents of the bill argued the need for reducing expenses, but the real reason was opposition to Gales. The next year the advocates for economy were successful and a law was passed which reduced the stipend for state printer to $900 a year without any allowances for delivery. In 1811 after efforts to repeal the law of 1810 had failed, Gales withdrew from the contest and Thomas Henderson, Jr., editor of the *Star,* a paper recently established in Raleigh, was elected.[32] As he had done in 1800, Gales altered the title of the *Register* to show the change in status. On December 27 the paper appeared under the title Raleigh *Register and North-Carolina Gazette.*

Publishing a country weekly in the early part of the nineteenth century was at best a laborious task. Type was set by hand and the impressions run off on a press that had changed little since the day Gutenberg introduced the art of printing to the western world. News was provided by the exchange, the wire service of that time. In 1792 Congress provided in the Postoffice Act for the free circulation of newspapers among the publishers[33] and from this exchange the editors made up their papers. However, this arrangement put the editor at the mercy of the post rider and frequent were the lamentations over the failure of the mails. In this respect Joseph Gales proved no exception. On many occasions the *Register* contained an apology for a lack of news due to a disappointment "in the receipt of our Northern Papers." The same cause was a source of annoyance in delivering the newspaper. On one occasion the *Register* was held up by a large amount of official mail.[34] In 1800 Gales suggested that certain postmasters were wilfully impeding the delivery of the *Register* to subscribers in the western part of the

[31] Raleigh *Register,* December 3, 10, 1804; October 14, 1805.
[32] Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," *loc. cit.,* p. 200.
[33] Mott, *American Journalism,* p. 160.
[34] Raleigh *Register,* September 22, 1801.

state.[35] In an effort to provide the best service possible the *Register,* like other newspapers of the period, geared its publication day to the arrival and departure of the mails. The first issue of the *Register* was published on Tuesday, but within the next decade publication day was changed three times to adjust to an altered mail schedule.

The *Register* retained its four page format throughout the antebellum period, but the size of the page underwent several changes. In November, 1808, Gales announced plans for improving his paper and on April 13, 1809, the *Register* appeared in a new dress and with enlarged columns. This was the first increase in size that Gales had made, though on a number of occasions before he had been forced to issue the *Register* on a smaller size. On January 23, 1804, his printing office was burned and the *Register* was printed on a half sheet for two months. In the *Register* of January 29, announcing the fire, Gales suggested arson, though he later admitted it was an accident.[36] His friends rallied to his aid and money was raised to permit him to buy new supplies. William Whitaker, a local cabinet maker, rebuilt his press; meanwhile, the *Register* was printed on William Boylan's press, a singular fact in light of the animosity existing between the two editors.

On a number of occasions the *Register* was printed on a smaller format because of the failure to receive paper.[37] This was remedied in 1808 when Gales built near Raleigh a paper mill which not only supplied him with paper for the *Register* but also for general sale.[38] During the session of the General Assembly in 1804, Gales issued the *Register* semiweekly at no extra cost to the subscribers. Other than this instance, however, the *Register* remained a weekly. What news could not be accommodated in the four pages of the paper was printed on an extra page, called a supplement, or, if possible, omitted until a later date. When the news warranted, Gales was not averse to issuing an extra.[39]

There was no uniformity in the make-up of the *Register.* Each page was closely set in type smaller than the body type of a modern newspaper. Headlines were unknown, though captions, hardly more than a label head set in bold face capitals, were used to indicate the news. The news story was written in a magazine style making it necessary to read through several paragraphs before discovering the who, what, when, and where of the story. Advertisements appeared on every page. These were usually set in several type sizes with very little display, more like the classified pages of today's newspaper. Occasionally there was a tiny stock cut to relieve the boredom of type, such as a horse for a stud advertisement, or a saddle with the announcement of the opening of a

[35] *Ibid.,* August 12, September 16, 1800.
[36] Gales Reminiscences, p. 150.
[37] Raleigh *Register,* January 27, 1806; February 11, 1808.
[38] *Ibid.,* September 29, 1808.
[39] *Ibid.,* March 17, April 7, 1806; December 8, 1808; December 14, 21, 1809.

harness shop.[40] For the most part, page one of the *Register* contained a column or two of advertisements, a list of the acts passed by the last session of the General Assembly, the laws passed by Congress, some official news from Europe, a speech by a congressman, or a political essay. Often enough there would be a runover to page two for a column or more. The remainder of page two sometimes carried the editorial flag and, during the sessions of Congress and the General Assembly, the proceedings of those bodies. The third page shared advertisements with domestic and foreign news and ofttimes the editorial flag. The last page was reserved for a poem, political and general essays, a humorous or fictional story, and advertisements.

After Richard Davison left the *Register*[41] Gales was aided in his editorial chores by his son Joseph, Jr. and Francis Asbury Lumsden, the latter an apprentice. Lumsden in 1836 was co-founder of the New Orleans *Picayune*.[42] In 1806 or 1807 Gales sent his son to Philadelphia with the intention of giving him a more extensive knowledge of printing than he could get in the small office in Raleigh.[43] On January 5, 1809, the *Register* bore a new imprint, Gales & Seaton. William Winston Seaton, a native of Virginia, had begun newspaper work in Richmond under the able tutelage of Thomas Ritchie,[44] editor of the semiweekly Richmond *Enquirer,* the leading newspaper in the southern states during these years. In 1806 Seaton came to Raleigh where he was employed on the *Minerva* as an assistant to Boylan.[45] The following year he bought the *North Carolina Journal* at Halifax and tactfully transferred the allegiance of that paper from the Federalists to the Republican party.[46] During his stay in Raleigh Seaton formed an attachment to Sarah Gales, oldest daughter of the editor of the *Register*. Consequently, it was no problem to give up the *Journal* at Halifax for a position as editorial partner on the Raleigh *Register,* and in January, 1809, he entered upon his new duties. The next April the alliance was cemented when Seaton married Sarah Gales.[47]

Before Gales left Philadelphia to come to Raleigh he had sold his newspaper, *Gales' Independent Gazetteer,* to Samuel Harrison Smith.[48] When the capital was removed from Philadelphia in 1800 Jefferson suggested to Smith that he move his printing office to Washington and issue a paper there. This was done, and on October 31, 1800, a triweekly, the *National Intelligencer,* made its debut. When Jefferson assumed

[40] Raleigh *Register,* March 4, 1800; November 23, 1802.
[41] See above p. 21.
[42] *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography,* XIII, 449-450.
[43] Gales Reminsicences, p. 152.
[44] Josephine Seaton, *William Winston Seaton of the National Intelligencer* (Boston, 1871), p. 15.
[45] Gales Reminiscences, p. 156.
[46] Seaton, *William Winston Seaton of the National Intelligencer,* p. 18.
[47] Gales Reminiscences, p. 156; Raleigh *Register,* April 6, 1809.
[48] See above p. 16.

the presidency, the *Intelligencer* became the official organ of the administration.[49] For Joseph Gales, as well as all editors, the *Intelligencer* was the prime source for news of Washington and the government.

In 1807 Smith offered the *Intelligencer* for sale. Gales wrote Smith and offered to buy the paper, provided the latter would remain on as a partner with his son Joseph Gales, Jr., who was then in Philadelphia rounding out his printing education. Smith accepted and the *National Intelligencer* passed back into the hands of Joseph Gales. Two years later Smith retired, and in 1812 W. W. Seaton left the position with his father-in-law in Raleigh to accept a like one with his brother-in-law in Washington.[50]

Joseph Gales, in company with most newspaper editors of his day, showed a decided reticence in publishing circulation figures. When he began the *Register* he described his circulation "as respectable," and stated that at the meeting of the General Assembly that year he "received considerable additions from the members."[51] In the *Register* of October 17, 1803, commenting on the beginning of the fifth volume of the paper, Gales remarked that each year of the *Register* had opened with an increased number of subscribers. The next year, November 22, when announcing the publication of a semiweekly for the meeting of the General Assembly, he evinced a desire to render his paper worthy of the encouragement "which it has so liberally received." Then again in the *Register* of April 13, 1809, Gales declared the extensive circulation of the *Register* "affords one of the best mediums for advertising." It is clear then that whatever the circulation of the *Register* was, it satisfied Joseph Gales. Frank Luther Mott in his study of American journalism estimates the average circulation of newspapers at the beginning of the century to be between six hundred and seven hundred, while in 1833 he approximates the average to be nearer a thousand. The Philadelphia *Aurora,* the leading Republican paper, claimed nearly seventeen hundred subscribers during its prime, and the leading country paper during this period, the *Farmer's Weekly Museum* published by Joseph Dennie at Walpole, New Hampshire, topped two thousand at the heighth of its popularity.[52] By assuming that the *Register* was the leading paper in North Carolina, which it was by 1810, it might be safe to place its circulation somewhere between five hundred and seven hundred.

However uncertain was the circulation of the *Register,* it is certain that Gales had trouble collecting from his subscribers. Dunning notices not infrequently occupied the first place in the editorial column, especially just before the meeting of the General Assembly.[53]

[49] Mott, *American Journalism,* pp. 176-179.
[50] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 153-155.
[51] *Ibid.,* pp. 142-143.
[52] Mott, *American Journalism,* pp. 159, 203.
[53] Raleigh *Register,* October 17, 1803.

In the opinion of the editor and the readers of an early nineteenth century newspaper, foreign and national news deserved primary consideration. Local news in the small provincial towns of the period was generally well known and distributed by word of mouth far in advance of the weekly publication day of the community newspaper. On the other hand, foreign and national news was fresh no matter if a month or more old. For this reason a greater portion of a paper was devoted to "Intelligence from Europe," "The Senate," or "Indian Affairs" than to events nearer home. It was not unusual then for the *Register* to contain three columns of foreign news on a five column page, or to devote an entire issue to the details of a national event such as the Burr conspiracy trial, the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair, or the death of Washington.[54]

Yet, it must not be understood that Gales completely ignored local news. Located as he was in the state capital, Gales felt it his duty to inform his readers of the outstanding affairs in Raleigh and North Carolina generally. A serious fire, whether in the capital city or elsewhere in the state, received due notice in the *Register*.[55] The opening of a mail stage between Petersburg, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina, which passed through Raleigh, prompted a story in the *Register* of February 15, 1803. The discovery of gold in Cabarrus County led Gales to write a leader on the event for his "Raleigh" column.[56] A chief source for local and state news was letters from correspondents. These ranged from commentaries on leading issues to accounts of astronomical phenomena.[57] For instance, in the *Register* of March 16, 1802, "Look Out" urged the citizens of Raleigh to provide the town with a fire engine. Since this was a favorite topic of Editor Gales' it is not unlikely that he was the author.[58] Gales welcomed these letters, but he was careful to caution the correspondents against immoderation, and refused to print an unsigned letter[59] although letters invariably appeared under a *nom de plume*.

The big running story of foreign news during this period was the war in Europe, but the one great continuous story was that of national politics. Here the *Register's* connection with the *National Intelligencer* gave it an advantage over other papers in North Carolina. Joseph Gales, Jr., in Washington would rush a copy of the *Intelligencer*—published triweekly until 1813 when it became a daily—to Gales in Raleigh, sometimes by special messenger, giving the *Register* an advance on news

[54] Raleigh *Register*, June 25, July 2, 1807; January 7, 1801.
[55] *Ibid.*, March 18, 1800.
[56] *Ibid.*, December 5, 1803.
[57] Raleigh *Register*, January 27, 1801.
[58] *Ibid.*, May 18, 1802.
[59] *Ibid.*, July 9, 1804.

of several days.[60] The dependence of the *Register* on the *Intelligencer* is noticeable in the increased use made of editorials taken from the Washington paper by the editors of the *Register,* especially after 1810.

The election of 1808 was regarded by Gales as of essential importance. In the *Register* of October 27, he declared that "every man who values his freedom and independence" should vote for James Madison, for an attempt will be made to overturn the Republican administration "whose constant aim has been to preserve the country in peace." Gales warned that if the "enemies of the present order of things succeed in their views" there will be a return to those conditions existing before 1800: excise and stamp taxes, "with a Sedition Law" to keep the people "from *murmuring*" under their oppressions. On the eve of Madison's inauguration the *Register* was "disposed to look up to him for everything great and good,"[61] and within two months it appeared that these hopes had been fully realized.

The *Register* of April 27, 1809, heralded the story that a reconciliation of affairs between England and the United States had been reached. This was the celebrated Erskine agreement.[62] Gales and Seaton, quoting from a *National Intelligencer* editorial, hoped that the past sources of animosity may "be dried up." At the same time, the editors pointed out that this agreement should "dissipate the delusion . . . that those who administer the general government, are actuated by feelings hostile towards commerce and G. Britain."[63] This exultance was brief, for on August 3, the *Register* reported that the British government had repudiated its minister.

October 4, 1810, the *Register* announced that the Berlin and Milan decrees as they affected the United States had been withdrawn by Napoleon. This was of sufficient interest to warrant an extra. The *Minerva* expressed surprise that the *Register* had not decked out its columns in black as a token of its sorrow and disappointment that there would be no war. Gales and Seaton denied the charge, affirmed that the first wish of the *Register* was for *"Peace with all the world,"* and challenged the *Minerva* to prove otherwise.[64]

The year 1812 opened ominously. On January 3, the *Register* detailed the horrible story of the Richmond theater fire in which many of Virginia's leading citizens, including Governor George W. Smith, lost their lives. On January 31, an account was given of a severe earth-

[60] Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1937), p. 783.

[61] Raleigh *Register,* March 2, 1809.

[62] David Erskine, British Minister in Washington, in his anxiety to secure an agreement between the United States and England, glossed over his instructions from Foreign Secretary George Canning and signed with Secretary of State Robert Smith an agreement which bound England to withdraw her Orders in Council as they concerned the United States.

[63] Raleigh *Register,* May 4, 1808.

[64] Raleigh *Register,* January 17, 1811.

quake which disturbed many parts of southeastern United States. The latter story prompted a correspondent to describe a violent volcano eruption near Asheville which was given as a cause for the earthquake. Though the *Register* printed the letter in good faith, it was forced to publish a retraction the next week after discovering it was a hoax.[65] The presidential election rallied the *Register* to support not only Madison but a new election law passed by the late General Assembly. This law gave the Assembly the choice of presidential electors and was passed because the reapportioning of districts due to the 1810 census would not take place until after the election. This action was sharply criticized by the *Minerva.*[66] The *Register,* admitting that the new method was not best for a permanent regulation, stoutly defended the law, contending it was perfectly constitutional and in accord with the method used in many other states.[67]

On June 26, 1812, the *Register* announced that war had been declared on Britain. The story was headlined simply "War" in large bold-faced type. Borrowing again from the *National Intelligencer,* the editors averred "that as the measure of War has been at length adopted from a conviction of its necessity almost to the existence of the Nation, we offer our sincere prayers and ardent hopes for a vigorous prosecution and successful termination."

Though opposed to war, Joseph Gales gave the War of 1812 the dignified support of the *Register.* Leading documents pertaining to execution of the war and relations with other powers were published in their entirety. Attention was directed to the few victories won by the Americans and attempts were made to explain the strategy of the American forces. News was supplied by letters, official and personal, and by stories taken from newspapers near the scene of action. Special effort was made to verify details, but frequent mail failures added greatly to Gales' problems.[68] Most of the news was printed with little editorial comment or was accompanied by an appropriate editorial from the *National Intelligencer,* the Boston *Chronicle,* or some other prominent paper. Standing heads such as "Naval Intelligence," "The War," or "Events of The War" drew attention to special news items.

Gales termed the attitude of the New England Federalists toward the war as treason; their intention, to destroy the union. He cautioned his readers against succumbing to their lure of "friends of peace" and characterized Harrison Grey Otis, leader of the Federalists, as a traitor and submissionist who would paralyze the hand of his government to serve the British cause.[69] When the Hartford Convention met, Gales

[65] *Ibid.,* February 7, 14, 1812.
[66] Raleigh *Minerva,* July 31, 1812.
[67] Raleigh *Register,* April 10, 1812.
[68] *Ibid.,* October 15, 1813.
[69] Raleigh *Register,* July 10, 1812; January 29, April 16, June 11, 1813; February 11, 1814.

reported with delight that New Hampshire and Vermont refused to attend, headlining his story *"The Bubble Burst."*[70]

The destruction of Washington provoked Gales to criticize sharply the conduct of the American forces defending the nation's capital. In the *Register* of September 9, 1814, Gales declared "that all was not done that might have been done in defence of the capital"; he pointed out that General William H. Winder, Commander of the American Army at Bladensburg, ordered a retreat before the whole of his forces had been in action. It appeared odd to Gales that with so much depending upon the outcome of this engagement "so little energy should have been displayed by the Commanding General to concentrate and unite the whole of the force under his control." However, this did not relieve the British from a severe indictment, and Gales considered the destruction of Washington "contrary to the principles of modern warfare" and "unwarrantable." One good has resulted, he added; it has "broken the charm of *English Influence* in America."[71]

The *Register* at first entertained little hope for the prospects of peace. On December 9, 1814, Gales wrote that the object of the British at Ghent seemed to be procrastination, and he was shocked at the ignorance of the British delegates about the geography of America.[72] On February 17, 1815, the *Register* spread the news of the great victory of American troops at New Orleans, but the celebration of this event was overshadowed one week later by the news of peace. "Never have we witnessed so general, so animated a picture of public satisfaction," Gales wrote in describing the reaction of Raleigh citizens to the news of peace. For a week following, Gales reported, the people of Raleigh celebrated; bonfires were lit, processions marched, cannons were fired, houses illuminated, sermons preached, and a public dinner was held. Gales attributed the peace to two circumstances: a disposition on the part of some of the powers at the Congress of Vienna to support the United States in her claim for maritime rights, and pressure from British manufacturers for a cessation of hostilities.

With the end of the War the Federalist party passed from the scene, the stigma of treason attached to its name. Delegates from the Hartford Convention arriving in Washington were greeted with demonstrations of joy by the people delirious over victory. Their situation, Gales wrote, "must have been an unenviable one"; all their political intentions and designs against the government were frustrated.[73] In North Carolina, the *Minerva,* which had deemed the late war a venture on the part of the United States to "cut off its own right hand,"[74] re-

[70] *Ibid.,* November 18, 1814.
[71] Raleigh *Register,* September 2, 16, October 21, 1814.
[72] *Ibid.,* December 30, 1814.
[73] Raleigh *Register,* March 17, 1815.
[74] Raleigh *Minerva,* January 15, 1813.

treated from the political arena. With the issue of November 10, 1810, William Boylan retired as editor and until November, 1813, the paper was edited by Abraham H. Boylan and Alexander Lucas, when the latter became sole publisher.[75] The *Register* which had come into being to advance the Republican party in North Carolina had accomplished its mission. Attention now was directed to the problems of a young nation forged out of the furnace of war.

[75] *Ibid.*, November 3, 1813.

CHAPTER III

NATIONALISM AND DEFEAT

The Register 1815-1830

Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans and the defeat of Napoleon opened a new period in United States history. Since the beginning, the federal government's domestic policies had been embittered and twisted by foreign affairs. Now Americans were free to concern themselves with their own interests, to shape and form the economic forces of the several sections to fit their ideas of government. It was a period of transition with emerging patterns of nationalism and sectionalism. The rise of a new section, the West, and the impact of the industrial revolution on the South and North provided the forces. The theme was nationalism and the efforts to fasten industry and westward expansion to this theme, with the concurrent opposition of sectionalism, gave flavor to the politics of the period. The Republican party, sobered and transformed by its experience of fifteen years, embraced the nationalism of the old Federalists, and that party, after one last fling in 1816, passed from the scene. There was ushered in that one party period in American politics called the Era of Good Feelings, underscored by shifting economic interests that saw stalwart supporters of a tariff, a bank, and internal improvements in 1816 become fiery proponents of nullification in 1832. New party alignments were formed. Former Federalists were absorbed into the reigning Republican party to emerge in 1824 and 1828 as Jacksonian men, while former Jeffersonian Republicans became identified with doctrines alien to their origin. The influence of economics upon politicians has never been better displayed. But for two years nationalism held the center of the stage.

North Carolina, with state pride awakened and public spirit aroused, shared in this national feeling and for several years the citizens showed a greater interest in their local prosperity than in the affairs debated by their representatives in the national government.[1] Economic readjustments in Europe following the return of peace brought prosperity to the state; old towns enjoyed a profitable trade and new towns were projected,[2] while on every hand internal improvement devotees stirred interest in canals and river navigation.

[1] Albert Ray Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina,* Volume XXIII, No. 1, *James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science,* pp. 23-24.

[2] Raleigh *Star,* November 10, 1815; Raleigh *Register,* November 15, 1822.

Raleigh was no exception as its people took a new interest in civic development. After ten years of agitating in the *Register* by Gales and civic minded correspondents, the legislature provided the governor with a new mansion, just outside the city limits at the foot of Fayetteville Street, and plans were afoot to renovate the capitol building.[3] A theater presented a regular repertory during the annual session of the legislature, and concert performers made Raleigh a stop on their tours.[4] The Academy was thriving, attracting students from as far away as Richmond, Virginia; its May Day program and commencement exercises were events looked forward to by the local citizens.[5] In 1815 the Raleigh Library Company was organized and a public reading room provided with maps, magazines, and newspapers was opened.[6] But of more general interest, and certainly greater comfort to the people, were the city water works opened in the fall of 1818; a crude arrangement at best, but one that provided running water to all parts of the town.[7] And for the poor and unfortunate, a charitable society was organized to provide relief and medical aid.[8]

In the forefront of this awakened interest, and harbinger of the spirit of nationalism, was the Raleigh *Register*. There were in 1815 three newspapers published in Raleigh. To join the *Register* and *Minerva,* Thomas Henderson, Jr. and Dr. Calvin Jones began the *Star* November 3, 1808, "a paper devoted to the agriculture interests" and professedly neutral in politics.[9] This neutrality was soon questioned by the *Minerva,*[10] while later the *Register* sparred with the *Star* on a number of occasions. The *Register,* however, was the leading paper and it enjoyed the prestige of being the organ of the dominant party within the state and the nation. Its editor, Joseph Gales, was one of Raleigh's leading citizens; a director of the state bank, superintendent of the Sunday school conducted in the Presbyterian Church, secretary of nearly every civic and benevolent society in Raleigh, commissioner and treasurer of the town, and after 1819, mayor.[11] In addition, his family were the leaders of Raleigh's social life.[12] Destiny had indeed smiled favorably on the refugee printer from England.

On December 7, 1821, Joseph Gales announced that the *Register* henceforth would be conducted under the firm name Gales and Son. The

[3] Raleigh *Register,* July 15, 1814; October 19, 1821.
[4] *Ibid.*, November 20, 1818.
[5] Raleigh *Register,* May 9, 1817; March 20, 1818.
[6] *Ibid.*, April 21, 1815.
[7] *Ibid.*, September 25, 1818.
[8] *Ibid.*, February 10, 1815; April 25, 1817.
[9] *Ibid.*, April 28, 1808.
[10] Raleigh *Minerva,* August 24, 1809.
[11] Joseph Gales to Thomas Ruffin, July 22, 1814, J. G. de Roulac Hamilton, ed., *The Ruffin Papers,* I, 146; Raleigh *Register,* January 19, 1816; January 24, 1817; William W. Holden, *Address on the History of Journalism* (Raleigh, 1881), p. 7.
[12] Carolyn Andrews Daniel, "The Early Career of David Lowry Swain 1801-1832," unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1947, p. 18.

son was Weston Raleigh, the youngest son of Joseph Gales, born in Raleigh, April 28, 1802.[13] Weston's youth was spent in Raleigh where he attended the local Academy, excelling in logic and geography.[14] By 1820 his parents feared that he might fall "into the snares which are scattered" about Raleigh, where the "young men are of too loose habits,"[15] and he was sent to a private school in Connecticut to prepare for Yale and "to acquire steady habits."[16] He entered Yale in the fall of 1820, but his stay was brief. In the following January he became involved in a fist fight and was dismissed.[17] His "steady habits" were to be acquired elsewhere and perhaps with this in mind Joseph Gales took his son into business with him, where he soon showed promise of following in his father's "steps, as far at least as relates to application to business."[18]

The next year, October 3, 1823, Gales and Son announced plans to publish a semiweekly *Register*. As they put it, people who are self-governed "ought to be fully and frequently informed on the state of public affairs." But a more practical reason was that the increase in postal services had made it possible to publish a newspaper more than once a week and insure prompt delivery. However, to serve those off the accelerated routes the weekly *Register* was continued, made up entirely from pages taken from the semiweekly, and reduced to a folio by dropping advertisements and miscellaneous articles. The semiweekly began November 18, 1823. Subscribers were charged $5 a year and advertisers paid $1 for fifteen lines of copy to run for three issues. In appearance it was the same as the old *Register* of four pages, each with five two and a quarter inch columns. On July 4, 1826, the paper was enlarged, a quarter of an inch added to each column.

In the meantime, many of North Carolina's most enterprising and progressive leaders recognized internal improvements as the most pressing need for the state after 1815. This was demonstrated in a series of reports made to the state legislature from 1815 to 1819 by Archibald DeBow Murphey, in which he envisioned a system of land and water routes designed to develop local commercial centers through increased trade.[19] Joseph Gales avowed a warm interest in this movement and gave it his support through the *Register*. Gales wrote that Murphey's report on internal navigation was "luminous"; Murphey he called the "Father of Internal Improvements in the State."[20]

[13] Gales Reminiscences, p. 23.
[14] Raleigh *Register*, October 31, 1817.
[15] Joseph Gales to Jared Sparks, February 18, 1820, Gales Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.
[16] Winifred Gales to Jared Sparks, July 18, 1820, *ibid.*
[17] Joseph Gales to Jared Sparks, January 28, 1821, Gales Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.
[18] Winifred Gales to Jared Sparks, May 2, 1822, *ibid.*
[19] Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina*, p. 9.
[20] Raleigh *Register*, December 8, 1815; November 5, 1819.

Gales did more than pay lip service to the Murphey program of internal improvements. Through publicity in the *Register* he promoted the organization of navigation companies chartered by the legislature but financed by private subscription, and he became the director of one, the Neuse River Navigation Company.[21] Then, in 1823, when the state legislature appointed an Internal Improvements Board, Joseph Gales was elected its secretary.[22]

A national internal improvement program also drew the support of Gales. This was the American System laid down by Henry Clay of Kentucky and ardently championed by the Young Republicans in Congress in 1816. It was simple and nationalistic: a protective tariff to promote industry and a widespread system of roads and canals financed by the tariff to enlarge the home market for agriculture. Gales gave the program his strong support notwithstanding the opposition of Nathaniel Macon, his friend and benefactor, and other North Carolina representatives in Congress.[23] In the *Register* of July 31, 1818, he reported that the "spirit of Internal Improvement is awakened and . . . [if] Congress cannot act upon the subject, we are glad to find the People do not wait for Acts of Congress, but take the good works efficiently in hand." To Gales, internal improvements were the key to the prosperity of the country. "There is no surer criterion of the prosperity of a Nation," he wrote in the *Register* of November 21, 1823, "than a progressive system of Internal Improvement." By it the country was exempted "from foreign difficulties and dissensions." Whatever, he concluded, "has a tendency to facilitate the intercourse between the States, to promote industry and competition, independent of other considerations, must receive our cordial approbation."

In regard to the tariff policies of the American System, the *Register* reflected its editor's advocacy. All during the late war with England Gales had stressed the need for "home manufactures." With the end of the war, he recognized a need for legislation to prevent British manufacturers from underselling American products. At one time he recommended the repeal of the constitutional provision prohibiting duties on exports, hoping thereby to levy a tax on the export of raw cotton to Britain which would in effect amount to protection for domestic industry.[24] The Tariff of 1816 provided a simpler solution, and Gales promptly brought the *Register* into support of this bill, though once again he was squarely opposed to Macon and the North Carolina delegation in Congress. To be independent, Gales wrote in the *Register* of March 15, 1816, we must manufacture for ourselves and "it is all important, at the present crisis, to encourage and support the infant

[21] *Ibid.*, April 2, 1813; December 4, 1815.
[22] *Ibid.*, February 7, 1823.
[23] Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina*, p. 14.
[24] Raleigh *Register*, April 14, 1815.

Manufacturing Establishments of the United States." In the *Register* of January 5, 1821, he again stated his position, declaring "we are in favor of home manufactures" and if the people "would exercise a little of that *common sense* . . . they would be convinced, that in proportion as in industry and economy are promoted amongst all classes, the Nation would be prosperous and happy."

In 1824, when new duties were proposed, Gales supported the increase, though conditions at the time favored a discreet stand.[25] But in 1828, when the first purely politician's tariff was passed, the *Register* was outspoken in defense of the act, despite outraged opposition to the tariff from parts of North Carolina and the South. In Gales' opinion, expressed in the *Register* of March 2, 1828, the increase of rates asked by the woolen manufacturers was necessary to prevent the destruction of the industry and "the ruin of all Agriculturists, who have turned their attention to the raising of Sheep," since Britain had adjusted her duties to discriminate against the American industry. To offset the added cost of woolen cloth, Gales urged North Carolina farmers to raise more sheep which "in this climate can be kept almost without expence," and the returns on wool will more than make up any increase in the cost of cloth. He agreed, however, that the tariff "seems to be acceptable to nobody," admitting that "party considerations had too much influence" in deciding upon the bill.[26]

Gales regretted the violent reaction of the opponents to this tariff and regarded the ebullience in South Carolina with contempt; "that testy patriotism, which, on every difference of opinion, talks of the dissolution of the Union." All were assured that the people of North Carolina were "too loyal in their devotion to principles to . . . follow in the wake of disaffection."[27]

Joseph Gales never doubted that a tariff would stimulate industry in North Carolina, as well as in the rest of the union. He thought the South, and especially North Carolina, showed promise for industrial development, and suggested in one instance that local merchants should divert part of their capital to manufacturing.[28] But more important, Gales felt that by developing industry a local market would be created for farm products. First, however, it was necessary that the farmers of North Carolina change their methods and "instead of constantly impoverishing, and finally exhausting land" adopt practices that "would as constantly improve it."[29] With this end in view Gales began in the *Register* of July 25, 1817, a series of essays on agricultural improvement by "Agricola," the pen name of George Washington Jeffreys, a North

[25] Raleigh *Register,* June 4, 11, 1824; see below p. 46.
[26] Raleigh *Register,* April 29, 1828.
[27] *Ibid.,* July 22, 1828.
[28] *Ibid.,* April 6, 1813; September 17, 1829.
[29] *Ibid.,* June 16, 1815.

Carolina farmer and agricultural reformer from Person County. These essays offered a corrective for such practices as shallow plowing, horizontal planting, mining the soil, and one crop culture. Gales reported that the essays were widely copied "into most of the respectable papers in other States," but their recommendations were not, "as our Farmers still go on in the beaten track of their Fathers of *cutting down their woods and exhausting their land!*"[30] This indifference he regretted, and he reminded the farmers that if they "will adopt an improved mode of cultivating their land" it will not be necessary in their old age "to desert their homes and emigrate to new countries in search of *fresh land.*"[31]

On December 24, 1818, the *Register* reported that members of the legislature "and other citizens" had organized the Agricultural Society of North Carolina. Recognizing that in the promotion of agricultural reform an organized society would do more good than mere publicity for improvements, Gales had stressed the need for such an organization some years earlier.[32] The North Carolina society was unique in one respect: the two rival editors William Boylan, formerly of the *Minerva* and bitter opponent of Gales during the Jeffersonian administration, was treasurer and Gales was secretary. The *Register* gave much publicity to the society and its activities, and its agriculture readers received "such hints as will enable" them "to receive support from their Mother Earth."[33]

In many respects Joseph Gales was far ahead of his readers. He was a genuine friend of progress and in no better way was this demonstrated than in his constant support of penal reform. Imprisonment for debt he regarded as "unjust and cruel, as well as unbecoming a humane and christian people."[34] To confine a man in prison because of misfortune is a waste of society's potential, and in a nation like the United States "which has in so many instances thrown off the tyranny of oppressive laws . . . it is a reflection upon our justice, that this feature of barbarism should still disfigure our civil code."[35] It was with pleasure, then, that Gales reported in the *Register* of December 29, 1820, that the North Carolina legislature had abolished imprisonment for debt. But his joy was short-lived, for the next year the law was repealed; it not only was unconstitutional but also encouraged a too extensive credit. In 1822 another law was passed which was acceptable. Gales again rejoiced. "Poverty and crime will no longer in this State, at least, be punished alike," he wrote in the *Register* of January 3, 1823; and he called upon the press in the other states "to add their mite towards ameliorating the condition of their fellow men."[36]

[30] Raleigh *Register,* October 3, September 12, 1817.
[31] *Ibid.,* September 12, 1817.
[32] *Ibid.,* November 8, 1810.
[33] Raleigh *Register,* October 4, 1822.
[34] *Ibid.,* December 29, 1820.
[35] *Ibid.,* August 8, 1823.
[36] *Ibid.*

The most important element in Gales' crusade for penal reform was North Carolina's need for a penitentiary. Rarely did the *Register* fail to advise a legislature of the necessity for such an institution. In his paper of January 3, 1817, after the legislature had once again failed to consider a penitentiary, Gales observed that had the bill been passed "no state in the Union [could] look down on North Carolina as wanting in liberality and public spirit." To Gales a penitentiary would not only secure a prisoner, a rarity in those days of flimsy county jails, but would provide a plan "under such discipline and government, as shall afford to criminals a chance for reformation."[37] More than this, he favored a complete revision of the state criminal code with a correct graduation of crime and punishment and a system designed not to punish, but to reclaim the criminal.[38] But Gales' efforts were in vain, for not in his lifetime, nor even that of his paper, was North Carolina to accept his earnest recommendations for a state penitentiary.

In the same spirit of progress Joseph Gales approached the matter of education. A move on the part of the Maryland legislature to secure public lands for the purpose of providing funds for public education captured Gales' attention, and he urged North Carolina to follow Maryland's example, adding that "nothing is so essential to the stability of free government as the general education of the people."[39] The appointment of a committee by the legislature in 1824 to investigate the problem of public education was greeted with general applause in the *Register* of January 7, 1825; however, results were not realized until fifteen years later.

It was a part of his nationalistic fervor that Gales took such pride in announcing the publication of American books by native authors. "Who *reads* American Books," he asked in the *Register* of August 16, 1822; "who will hereafter *forbear to read* them?" Every day the pretensions of American literature increase. Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, and James Fenimore Cooper were unexcelled by any modern novelist, Gales exclaimed, and their books "all breathed of HOME—it is all AMERICAN."[40]

Though the *Register* was a vehicle in which Gales expressed his views, it was also a newspaper with an obligation, to a degree, to carry news to its readers. The big stories—besides Congress, the state legislature, and the presidential elections—during the late teens and early twenties were fires, the Florida War, and the Denmark Vesey slave insurrection in Charleston. Fire was the most common calamity in the ante-bellum period. The *Register* of July 28, 1815, reported the destruction of Petersburg, Virginia, by fire, and on other occasions fires of equal severity in other towns throughout the country were reported.

[37] Raleigh *Register*, June 30, 1820.
[38] *Ibid.*, October 13, 1826.
[39] *Ibid.*, November 9, 1821.
[40] Raleigh *Register*, May 14, 1824.

But on June 14, 1816, Gales had a fire closer at hand to cover. In less than two hours nearly two blocks of Raleigh's most populous area was consumed by "devouring flames"; in all, fifty-one establishments were burned. Gales called for action, pointing out that the calamity could have been avoided if only Raleigh had a fire engine and an adequate supply of water. "Will not these facts open the eyes of those who are opposed" to such improvements as "an *unnecessary* public tax," he asked. They did,[41] but it availed the citizens of Raleigh little, for on February 28, 1823, the *Register* again reported a serious fire in the town and Gales wrote, "we have to regret that for want of proper care, the Fire Engine belonging to the city was so much out of order that it could not be used."

The Florida War met with Gales' approval. He allotted as much space to its progress as the four pages of his paper would allow. Spain, he reported in the *Register* of July 31, 1818, has seen her "incompetency to maintain her authority in the Floridas," and he hoped she would see the wisdom in ceding the area to the United States. When she did, Gales nodded assent.[42]

On August 30, 1822, the *Register* carried the story of the Denmark Vesey insurrection in Charleston, South Carolina. It was reported by the mayor of Charleston, and, though brief, was "nevertheless sufficiently comprehensive to display the diabolical plot in its most glaring colors." Gales observed "that among those who were the most deeply implicated, there was not one who complained of ever having been ill-treated." In his opinion the views expressed by certain congressmen during the Missouri controversy, which had recently agitated the country, were partly responsible for the outbreak. The conduct of the trial which followed won praise from Gales, who declared its members "displayed a degree of justice and moderation which could scarcely be expected in the general excitement produced by the occasion."[43]

In the period of one party politics and the realignment of parties preceding Andrew Jackson's accession to the presidency, newspapers took an active part in the campaigning. To a degree they took over the duties of a political party: organizing party forces, recommending candidates for electoral tickets, rallying local meetings, and providing a large part of the campaign literature. In brief, the newspaper served as the unifying force in the campaign. It was in just this sort of circumstance that the *Register* found itself in the presidential election of 1824.

The election of 1816 had occasioned little alarm among the Republicans. James Monroe of Virginia received the approval of the Republican congressional caucus, though he was nearly defeated by William H. Crawford of Georgia. The Federalists nominated their last presidential

[41] Raleigh *Register*, June 21, 1816; September 15, 1818; March 12, 1819.
[42] *Ibid.*, February 26, 1819; January 12, 1821.
[43] Raleigh *Register*, September 6, 1822.

candidate, Rufus King of New York. Gales thought Monroe was eminently fitted for the presidency; the only objection he had seen was that Monroe "is a Virginian."[44] After the caucus, Gales averred in the *Register* of March 29, 1816, that it was "unnecessary to say much more on this subject" and, accordingly, there was little mention of the campaign and ultimate success of Monroe's pretensions.

Monroe's re-election, four years later, had passed with hardly a murmur. Gales observed in his paper of October 27, 1820, that "the election of Electors for President and Vice President . . . comes on with so gentle an aspect, and with a step so light, that its approach is scarcely noticed." But though Gales regarded this calm as an indication that "the warring elements of party are at rest," the storm that was to break in 1824 and after had already rustled in Congress. This was the agitation over the admission into the union of Missouri as a slave state. Gales personally was opposed to slavery, but, "aware of the delicacy of the subject and of the difficulties which incompass it," he was careful to arouse no resentment.[45] The *Register* gave both sides of the debates over Missouri, yet Gales' editorials were in opposition to any restriction upon Missouri. He was greatly relieved when the question was settled and trusted "it will never again in any shape, make its appearance in the Councils of the Nation."[46]

Though Monroe might have appeared to the country as a symbol of concord, the contest for his seat began almost immediately after his second inauguration, with five candidates in the field, each professing to be a genuine Republican. However, it was not until 1823 that the *Register* came out openly for a candidate. In the paper of July 11, the editors, Gales and Son, denied the claim made by the Washington *Republican*, spokesman for John C. Calhoun in the nation's capital, that North Carolina favored Calhoun. The people of North Carolina, the Galeses believed, had not yet made up their minds, but of one thing the editors were convinced: the people wanted the question settled by their vote and not that of the House of Representatives. Two weeks later, July 25, the editors of the *Register* were again challenged; and this time they declared for a candidate. A correspondent in the Milton (North Carolina) *Gazette* chided the Raleigh editors for not reprinting an article on the presidential race which had appeared in a Nashville, Tennessee, paper. Their reason for not doing so, the Galeses answered, was that the article contained unfounded accusations against some of the candidates, particularly Calhoun and John Quincy Adams. As for not taking a stand on the presidential question, they argued that up to

[44] *Ibid.*, February 9, 1816.

[45] Raleigh *Register*, September 20, 1825; see also Gales Reminiscences, pp. 140-141, for other views on slavery. Gales was an active member of the American Colonization Society and served as secretary of the Raleigh chapter. Raleigh *Register*, June 18, 1819.

[46] Raleigh *Register*, March 9, 1821; January 14, February 11, March 3, 10, 1820.

now it had been too early for discussion. However, since the approaching legislature would form a general ticket and the ensuing Congress would recommend a candidate, the Galeses agreed that the time for discussion had arrived. In regard to the presidency, the editors admitted "there is one circumstance which inclines us to favour Mr. Crawford's pretensions." This was the caucus vote in 1816 in which Crawford received fifty-four votes to Monroe's sixty-five, after which he had withdrawn out of respect for Monroe. Furthermore, the editors continued, Crawford has done nothing since that time to lower himself in the public estimation, and "we cannot help believing that he will succeed at the ensuing election." As it was, all of the candidates were Republicans and nationalists. Both Adams and Clay were highly thought of by the Galeses. In respect to Calhoun, they believed him to be a man "of virtuous and independent principles, highly gifted by nature," and doubted not that "at some future day he will probably fill the highest station in the Union." But Crawford they regarded as the logical candidate of the party.

After the state elections in August, the editors of the *Star,* now John Bell and Alexander J. Lawrence, declared that Crawford's popularity had declined in North Carolina "decidedly in favor . . . of JOHN C. CALHOUN . . . ."[47] The Galeses called for proof and asserted that no "candidate can be placed in competition with Mr. CRAWFORD." They assented to a high opinion of Calhoun but believed he was "too young to be placed at the head of our General Government."[48]

Lemuel Bingham and Philo White, editors of the Salisbury *Western Carolinian,* chief supporter of Calhoun in North Carolina, accused the *Register's* editors of collusion with Crawford men in the last legislature in maintaining a deliberate silence on the presidential question until after the election.[49] The Galeses indignantly denied the charge, complaining that the opponents of Crawford were indulging in abuse instead of argument, and repeated that they had maintained silence because, in their opinion, discussion of the presidential question was premature.[50]

On October 3, the *Register* reported that Crawford had been confined to bed with a "bilious fever," but he was understood to be convalescent. This was an understatement, for Crawford had suffered a paralytic stroke, but the opposition papers, at least in North Carolina, refrained from exploiting to its fullest the true nature of Crawford's illness.[51] On the other hand, the *Register,* in league with most of the Crawford press, maintained a discreet silence regarding the condition

[47] Raleigh *Star,* August 15, 1823.
[48] Raleigh *Register,* August 22, 1823.
[49] Salisbury *Western Carolinian,* September 9, 1823.
[50] Raleigh *Register,* September 19, 26, 1823.
[51] Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina,* p. 107.

of their candidate, or minimized its seriousness by publishing frequent stories of his recovery.[52]

As the campaign increased in its intensity the Galeses expressed regret at the avidity with which Adams was attacked in the press. This sort of behavior, they complained in the *Register* of December 2, 1823, was unnecessary; "whatever his name or party, we will never lend our aid to tarnish the lustre of a good man's fame to favor our own good feelings."

With complete disregard of Crawford's disability, a congressional caucus in February, 1824, nominated him for president, with Albert Gallatin as running mate. The caucus had been attacked in North Carolina since 1822,[53] but the *Register's* editors defended it as both expedient and democratic, contending that "it is the only means by which we may prevent the election devolving on the House of Representatives."[54] The Galeses were disappointed in the number who attended the caucus, but they conceded that it was sufficient to concentrate "the Republican strength of the Union" around Crawford. Otherwise, had the caucus not been held, the people, confused "by the conflicting claims of half a dozen candidates," would have been at loss to make a decision, the election would have gone to the House, and the people "would lose the power of selecting their own rulers."[55]

After the meeting of the legislature in December, 1823, which nominated a ticket of Crawford electors,[56] opponents to Crawford determined to unite their forces on a ticket pledged to the candidate most likely to defeat Crawford in the national balloting. The *Register* of April 20, 1824, published the ticket, "inaptly styled" the People's ticket, declared the Galeses as they dismissed it as a formidable threat to Crawford. Who does it support, they asked; "was it not originally created to forward the views of Mr. Calhoun, is it not now favorable to Jackson, may it not yet incline to Clay, and finally take up Mr. Adams?" It was clear, the editors contended, that the people will support the ticket recommended to them by the legislature, their representatives, and not "that formed by a gratuitous assumption of power on the part of a few unauthorized individuals."

On March 4, a convention held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, nominated Andrew Jackson for President and Calhoun for Vice-President. The editors of the *Register* evinced surprise. Heretofore, they wrote in their paper of March 23, Pennsylvania had acted "the character of an intelligent, peaceful and moral State" and it was extraordinary that the "State . . . should not have made the proper distinction between the

[52] Raleigh *Register,* November 21, 1823; June 15, July 30, 1824.
[53] Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina,* p. 79.
[54] Raleigh *Register,* January 30, 1824.
[55] Raleigh *Register,* February 27, 1824.
[56] *Ibid.,* December 26, 1823.

qualifications of a Soldier and a Statesman." The *Register's* editors had never considered that Jackson had a chance. They conceded that he was a "distinguished citizen and a gallant warrior . . . , but what acquaintance," they asked, "has he with the civil policy of our country? His province has been the camp, not the cabinet."[57]

The removal of Calhoun from the presidential race caused some consternation among the Calhoun papers. The Washington *Republican*, "with admirable facility," quickly hoisted the Jackson banner.[58] The editors of the *Western Carolinian* and the *Star* showed some reluctance; the Salisbury editors, assuaging their regret by bowing to the will of the people, accepted Jackson as "the only man who can beat the caucus ticket, in *North Carolina,*" but Lawrence and Bell hesitated to declare a new preference, though they insisted that "the current of popular sentiment was . . . setting rapidly in favor of Jackson and Adams."[59]

It soon became evident to the editors of the *Register* that Jackson was the main threat to Crawford's pretensions in North Carolina, and on him they concentrated their attention. Efforts were made to fasten the onus of Federalism on the General; he was accused of favoring a high tariff,[60] though the senior editor of the *Register* had been an advocate of protection since the War of 1812. The Galeses argued consistently, with some force, that Jackson lacked the talents "necessary to qualify a man for the Chief Magistracy of the Union."[61] On July 27, the *Register* contained an unverified rumor that Jackson would accept the vice-presidency under Adams; the editors drew on the fact that the *National Journal,* the Adams paper in Washington, had merged with the Washington *Republican,* advocate of Jackson, and henceforth would support Adams. But this rumor was never realized. On October 15, the Galeses published a letter from Jesse Benton, a former North Carolinian and brother of Thomas Hart Benton, which listed in great detail all the violent deeds of Jackson's early career in Tennessee. "[I]f one half of what this writer states, be true," the editors exclaimed, "we cannot but wonder how any man who has the least regard for virtue . . . can support Andrew Jackson."

Whether the voters of North Carolina respected virtue or not, the elections in November resulted in a complete defeat for Crawford; the People's ticket polled 20,177 votes to 15,896 for Crawford. The Galeses admitted that the majority was greater than had been anticipated, "owing to the large number of votes taken in the Western Counties." They insisted, however, that Crawford was the strongest candi-

[57] Raleigh *Register,* March 5, 1824.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] Salisbury *Western Carolinian,* March 16, 1824; Raleigh *Star,* April 2, 1824.
[60] Raleigh *Register,* May 4, 18, June 11, 1824.
[61] Raleigh *Register,* June 18, 1824.

date and "if three tickets had been run . . . Mr. Crawford would have received the vote of the State."[62]

On December 1, the electors met in Raleigh and cast the votes of North Carolina for Jackson,[63] and on December 21, the *Register's* editors sadly reported that the "inevitable" had happened; the names of Adams, Jackson, and Crawford would go to the House and by it a president would be selected.

Jackson was the most popular man. He had received ninety-nine electoral votes to Adams' eighty-four, Crawford's forty-one, and Clay's thirty-seven. With Clay out of the running and Speaker of the House, the editors of the *Register* readily recognized that his friends held "the balance of power in their hands."[64] February 1, 1825, the Galeses reported in their paper that Adams would very likely be the choice of the House. A member of Congress writing to a friend in Raleigh had stated that a messmate of his from the Kentucky delegation had said that Clay would support Adams. On February 15, the *Register* confirmed the result: "THE LONG AGONY IS OVER! and J. Q. ADAMS is President of the United States." The editors admitted their preference for Adams over Jackson, but confessed "while our efforts could avail any thing, we advocated the cause of Mr. Crawford . . . but when it was ascertained that the vote of the State would be given to General Jackson, we remained silent"; they had "still hoped that the House of Representatives would decide in favor of Mr. Crawford."

With the election settled, the people of Raleigh prepared to welcome Lafayette, famous French hero of the American Revolution. Lafayette had arrived in the United States the previous year and his triumphant tour through the North had competed with the election for space in the *Register*. Since September Raleigh citizens had eagerly awaited his visit.[65] He reached the capital city March 3, having been escorted from the Virginia line by Colonel Thomas G. Polk commanding a troop of cavalry from Mecklenburg County. Lafayette's visit in Raleigh lasted two days. It was a gala occasion: military parades, a public dinner and ball, and speeches by all the dignitaries. The *Register* suspended publication for the event. Students of the University at Chapel Hill walked the twenty-five miles to Raleigh and were personally presented to the General by Colonel William Polk. Lafayette left Raleigh and continued on his southern tour, his journey providing news until the late summer.[66]

Adams had hardly assumed the presidency when Jackson's friends

[62] *Ibid.*, November 23, 1824. Newsome, *The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina*, p. 157n corrects these returns as follows: People's ticket 20,415, Crawford ticket 15,621.
[63] Raleigh *Register*, December 3, 1824.
[64] *Ibid.*, January 28, 1825.
[65] Raleigh *Register*, September 17, October 26, December 20, 1824.
[66] *Ibid.*, February 25, March 1, 8, 15, 18, 1825.

raised the cry that the people had been cheated of their choice. Clay's decision for Adams instead of Jackson and the subsequent appointment of the Kentuckian as Secretary of State convinced the Jackson men that a bargain had been made between the two, and with the cry of "corrupt bargain" Jackson's campaign for 1828 began. In November, 1825, the *Register* reported that Jackson had resigned his seat in the Senate; the reason, his nomination for the presidency by the legislature of Tennessee. He deemed "it improper to retain a place where he might be suspected of exercising an influence tending to his own aggrandizement."[67] A noble sentiment, the Galeses conceded, but hardly in keeping with the General's character. The next month Adams, in his first message to Congress, introduced plans to send ministers to the Panama Congress, a meeting of representatives from the new South American Republics, to discuss problems common to the American nations. Since this was a favorite project with Clay, Jackson supporters recognized a chance to discredit the administration. At once a lengthy and acrimonious debate arose over the confirmation of ministers to the Congress. Immediately the nation's press took up the issue.

In Raleigh, the Galeses with their *Register* supported the project from the start and doubted that the Senate would hesitate to approve; they even suggested Albert Gallatin and William Crawford as men "eminently qualified for the confidential station."[68] As opposition intensified, the editors rallied to the defense of Adams. They admitted, with the critics, that "it would be impolitic for the U. States to join the confederacy, and become responsible for their acts, yet," they pointed out, "the happiest effects would result from the presence of Representatives prepared" to discuss matters "connected with our interests." The United States "must at some future day, participate" in the results of measures adopted by this Congress; therefore, the Galeses concluded, "the advantages that would be gained . . . in our future progress as a nation . . . cannot easily be calculated."[69] At length Congress approved the project, but before the American ministers arrived the conference had acted.[70]

During the debate in the Senate over the Panama Congress issue, John Randolph of Virginia, incensed by the corrupt bargain charge, rose and in a speech violently attacked Clay, referring to the relationship between the Secretary of State and the President as "the combination unheard of till then, of the Puritan and the blackleg." Clay at once challenged the Virginian to a duel and Randolph accepted, but both were poor shots and neither was hurt. The editors of the *Register* regarded the whole episode with disgust. Writing in the paper of April 18, they

[67] *Ibid.*, November 8, 1825.
[68] Raleigh *Register,* December 13, 1825.
[69] *Ibid.*, February 3, 1826.
[70] Raleigh *Register,* October 3, 1826.

insisted that any senator other than Randolph would be punished for "so flagrant a violation not only of parliamentary usage but of every thing like decorum" and stated that Vice-President Calhoun "merits reprehension for his neglect in enforcing the rules of order." A month later Randolph left for a vacation in England, and the Galeses recalled that Claudius, King of Denmark, had sent his nephew Hamlet to England, with the hope that the climate and land would restore his reason. "We do not scruple," the editors commented, "to express our wish that Mr. Randolph may derive from his transatlantic excursion, all the benefits," which were expected for the Danish prince.[71]

The charge of corrupt bargain was ignored in the *Register* until 1827. On August 14, the editors noted that Jackson had identified James Buchanan of Pennsylvania as the source for the charge against Clay. The next issue of the *Register* contained a letter from Buchanan in which he denied any part in the dispute. There the matter rested until October 2, when the *Register's* editors commented that a letter of Judge Jacob S. Isaacs of Tennessee, which they printed, indicated that the Jackson forces were in a panic because of Buchanan's denial. Isaacs involved Representative Phillip S. Markley, also of Pennsylvania, in the plot, declaring that Markley had approached him before the House election with the suggestion that he advise Jackson to appoint Clay secretary of state. This the Galeses doubted and dismissed as absurd. Why, they asked, if "Jackson has given an impartial detail of the facts," as his friends claim, "the necessity for any additional evidence?" This letter, in their opinion, "so far from proving any thing, absolutely weakens the force of the charge as originally presented." The Galeses were sustained in their doubts when Markley, in a public address which was published in the *Register* November 9, denied any implication in the corrupt bargain charge. This convinced the editors that the whole charge was nothing but an "electioneering plot" designed to discredit the Adams administration. In January, 1828, Clay's address vindicating himself from the charge made by Jackson was published in the *Register,* and in the opinion of its editors "the abuse and calumny dealt out so unsparingly against Mr. Clay, by the supporters of General Jackson" was not sustained by proof.[72]

As they had done in 1824, the editors of the *Register* held off active participation in the election of 1828 until a year before the election took place. On June 1, 1827, they published two letters advancing Adams for re-election, expressed concern that some editors were attempting to arouse sectional prejudices "by representing different parts of the country as having distinct and separate interests," and printed extracts from Washington's Farewell Address warning against the dangers of secession. Lawrence and Bell, of the *Star,* evidenced surprise that the

[71] *Ibid.,* May 26, 1826.
[72] Raleigh *Register,* January 18, 1828.

Register's editors saw "even a remote possibility that *Mr. Adams* will get the vote of" North Carolina.[73] The Galeses failed to understand their astonishment because, as they claimed, they had as yet taken no position. They professed to have no knowledge of the relative strength of either candidate, but pointed out that if Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York voted for Adams, which seemed likely, whatever the vote of North Carolina, it would matter little.[74] In November the *Register* definitely became an Adams paper. Beginning in the issue of November 20, a series of essays—which had originally appeared in the Richmond *Whig,* edited by John N. Pleasants—in favor of Adams were published. These essays, which had been "attributed to Mr. Madison," the Galeses contended "present facts that must produce strong impressions upon the mind not deaf to the voice of reason." The next month Weston Gales delivered the keynote address at a meeting in Raleigh to elect delegates to a convention. The convention was held December 20, also in Raleigh, and an Adams ticket for North Carolina was nominated.[75]

A prominent feature of the Jackson campaign was to compare Jackson with Washington. While the Galeses reproved some of Jackson's opponents for trying to take away from him the credit for the victory of American troops at New Orleans, they refused to place Jackson on an equal footing with Washington. "It is true they were both great Military Characters," the editors conceded, "but here the likeness ends." Washington, they asserted, "was a profound Legislator and Statesman . . . but take from Gen. Jackson his military renown, and nothing is left to raise him above the rank of his fellows."[76]

There were few issues in the 1828 election. Congress presented Adams with one major act, the "Tariff of Abominations," and around the tariff some attempt was made to rally support for or against the two candidates. Jackson maintained that he was in favor of a "judicious tariff," claiming that he had "imbibed his views of the American System, during the Revolution." The *Register's* editors scoffed at this last statement, pointing out that Jackson was only nine years old at the outbreak of the Revolution. This development of "the precocious intellect of the General" fits well with a man "who vapors about his being uninfluenced by personal aggrandizement [while] he labors to associate himself with the events of the Revolution." But "if the General thinks," they declared, that by the use of such an indefinite term as "judicious," "to avoid a committal, and to curry favor with both parties," to dupe the people, he will be mistaken; they "will see through the subterfuge."[77] As for the position of Adams on a protective tariff, the *Register* main-

[73] Raleigh *Register,* July 3, 1827.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*, December 18, 25, 1827.
[76] Raleigh *Register,* February 26, 1828; August 11, 1826.
[77] Raleigh *Register,* May 2, 1828.

tained a discreet silence, although the editors, as indicated earlier, were in favor of it.

Without issues, the editors of both factions resorted to scurrility. Joseph Gales was charged with deserting the party, and he admitted that the old divisions of Federalists and Republicans had broken up, "many of his old Republican friends taking [an] opposite direction, and as many of those formerly opposed to him, arraying themselves on his side." But he insisted "that he is still following the same course which he has always pursued, advocating Republican principles, and supporting . . . the most highly esteemed and best qualified Republican Candidates."[78] The Galeses, on their part, challenged the *Star's* editor's assertion that Rachel Jackson, wife of the General, was *"as pure as any female living,"* though they studiously avoided any mention of the charge of adultery made against Jackson and his wife by some of their fellow anti-Jackson editors. Yet, the Galeses insisted, the records cast some doubt on the chastity of Mrs. Jackson. They held in horror the fact that Jackson had ordered the execution, "in cold blood, [of] six of his fellow-citizens."[79] Nevertheless, the editors of the *Register* charged the partisans of Jackson with "substituting *sound* for *substance,"* complaining that it was "in vain to reason with them."[80] They chided the Jackson editors for laboring "the General's regularity in attending preaching," wondered if the "decalogue is inscribed over the altar-piece" in a church Jackson had recently built at his home, and, if so, "whether the sixth, seventh and tenth articles of the Mosaic Law are included."[81]

It was all to no avail; November 25, 1828, the *Register* reported that Jackson had been elected. "Our mortification is great," the editors confessed, but it is the will of the majority. "We have our *fears*— we trust they may not be *realized."*

An immediate result of Jackson's assumption of the presidency was the open acceptance of the spoils system. The Galeses began a column under a standing head "Reform" where in each issue they listed the government officials "proscribed" by Jackson. They warned the administration against this wholesale removal from office "of men of tried fidelity . . . merely to gratify the wishes of hungry expectants, without any reference to merit or capacity."[82] The appointment of so many editors to public office threatened to create a press "subsidized to promote the views of the government."[83] But "the searching operations . . . at length reached" Raleigh and "another instance of proscription for opinion's sake" was effected. The contract to print the Acts of Con-

[78] *Ibid.,* February 26, 1828.
[79] *Ibid.,* May 22, 1827; May 6, 1828.
[80] *Ibid.,* September 23, 1828.
[81] Raleigh *Register,* October 7, 1828.
[82] *Ibid.,* May 8, 29, 1829.
[83] *Ibid.,* August 10, 1829.

gress, held by the *Register* since Jefferson's first administration, was given to the *Star*. "Having dared . . . to oppose the election of General Jackson, the Editors must be punished for their contumacy," the Galeses wrote. When it is seen "that abject servility to the powers that be, is a greater recommendation in the eyes of the President, than fidelity to the public, we should be led to suspect the soundness of our principles."[84] For the first time in twenty-nine years—since the triumph of Jefferson in 1800—the *Register* was an opposition paper.

[84] Raleigh *Register,* February 15, 1830.

CHAPTER IV

OPPOSITION AND VICTORY

The Register 1830-1840

On November 11, 1830, the semiweekly Raleigh *Register* was discontinued; Gales and Son had found "that the population of North-Carolina [was] not sufficiently dense to support a semi-weekly Newspaper."[1] One week later a weekly was issued resplendent in new dress and enlarged to six columns. This was the beginning of the thirty-second volume of the Raleigh *Register*. A newspaper founded to defeat successfully the aspirations of one Adams, it had twenty-nine years later failed to stem the tide which swept a second Adams from office. And now the editors faced a future overshadowed with blighted hopes, dim and foreboding.

The spectre of nullification stalked the land. President Jackson had thrown down a challenge to the American System. He had questioned the validity of the United States Bank, thought by many to have been settled ten years before by John Marshall and the Supreme Court, and since by Nicholas Biddle's masterful handling of its affairs. He had "duped" those who believed his record on internal improvements and looked forward to years of uninterrupted government spending on schemes designed to develop commerce and open the country to nascent industry. He had exerted the right of the executive to challenge the prerogative of Congress and would soon exercise his independence of the Supreme Court. Just as serious, the President had cast from office public officials with long years of service and surrounded himself with a coterie of men who were rank politicians, almost completely devoid of the qualities of statesmen. Even the press of the country was blighted, with such editors as Duff Green and Francis P. Blair accepting government patronage in return for blind devotion to party, and one, William Lloyd Garrison in a paper called the *Liberator,* threatening to extirpate slavery in defiance of law and reason.

It was in truth a revolutionary age, the Galeses wrote in their *Register* of April 28, 1831. Old governments were falling and new ones were being erected in their places; old party lines were being obliterated and the outlines of new ones were shaping up. It was an age that would see the formation of political parties that have endured, with slight modification, to the present day. As the Galeses began their thirty-second

[1] Raleigh *Register,* September 30, 1830.

volume of the *Register,* now on the side of conservatism, they were for ten years to attack usurpation of government in the name of party, while they contributed to the party's existence by championing the extension of suffrage and multiplication of elected offices, the nominating convention—all the basis of party organization and discipline.

It was in this atmosphere of gloom that the Galeses took up the question of nullification. The protective tariff of 1828 had elicited the support of the *Register,* but it drove South Carolina and John C. Calhoun to the defense of state rights and nullification. The Galeses had insisted that the tariff laws were not oppressive to the South; consequently, there was no cause for "the *Quixotic* enterprize of *nullifying* the Tariff, or the still more treasonable attempt of resisting the Constitutional Law of the Union."[2] But though "Quixotic" to the Galeses, nullification was a basic principle to its expounder John C. Calhoun.

Calhoun developed the doctrines of nullification in the South Carolina Exposition, written during the debate over the tariff of 1828. But he kept his authorship secret and urged South Carolina to take no immediate action, since Adams would soon be replaced in the presidency by Jackson who, he thought, would prove to be an ally. It took Calhoun two years to find out he was wrong. On April 13, 1830, leaders of the Democratic party attended a Jefferson Day dinner in Washington. Only a few weeks before, the celebrated debate between Senators Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts had taken place and the tenets of nullification had been fully argued. It was expected that Jackson would indicate which side of the debate he favored. The *Register* of April 26 carried the story. To the editors, the dinner "was more appropriately, a Jackson Dinner, gotten up by his friends perhaps, for the purpose of rallying their party, under the illustrious name of Jefferson." When the time came for the President to give a toast, Jackson rose and pledged the preservation of the union. Calhoun and the nullifiers were rebuffed. Momentous though this was, it escaped the Galeses for their observation was that "the volunteer sentiments . . . were rather flat"—Jackson's toast was a "volunteer sentiment."

Although the break between Jackson and the Vice-President was complete, it was not until the following January that the *Register* reported that "an alienation has taken place between" the President and Calhoun. This was prompted by the news that Jackson had discovered that Calhoun, as Secretary of War in Monroe's cabinet, had "strongly urged the propriety of arresting the General and bringing him to a Court Martial for his conduct at Pensacola during the Florida War." The Galeses advanced the idea that "this disclosure is now made for the purpose of weakening the standing of Mr. CALHOUN with the President, and that it is one of the many measures devised by Mr. VAN

[2] Raleigh *Register,* April 22, 1830.

BUREN, for that purpose."[3] On February 24, 1831, the Galeses began publication of the correspondence of Calhoun with Jackson over this issue, asserting that in their opinion Calhoun's "political prospects, so far as they relate to his elevation to the Presidency, [were] completely blasted."

Calhoun now revealed his authorship of the South Carolina Exposition and issued an *Address to the People of South Carolina,* a restatement of the doctrines in the Exposition. This *Address,* published in the *Register* of August 18, 1831, was regarded by the Galeses as an "insurmountable barrier between [Calhoun] and the Presidential chair." The editors regretted that the South Carolinian had "taken a step which must inevitably shake the confidence of his fellow-citizens . . . in the soundness of his political views." They challenged his claim that the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 were "his text-book," and quoted Madison as declaring "that at the time the Virginia Resolutions were penned, the doctrines now contended for by the Nullifiers were never once dreamed of." Calhoun's argument that the state is "the ultimate tribunal which is to decide a controversy that involves the powers of the United States and a particular State," the Galeses thought "too refined and sublimated." If there is one principle in the constitution, they contended, which has "been settled by legislation, adjudication and general acquiescence" it is "that in a conflict of power between the United States and a State, the final efficient tribunal is the SUPREME COURT."

In 1832 a new tariff act was passed representing reductions, but still protective in principle. The Galeses pointed out "that the distress said to be experienced by our citizens from the Tariff laws, is greatly over-rated." After all, they argued, it was South Carolina congressmen who first suggested "protection of our infant Manufactures . . . , not only with a view of assisting those Manufactures, but for the purpose of raising up a market for the Agriculturists of the Country." Now that such a market had been created, it would be a "suicidal policy" to adopt an "unqualified repeal of the Tariff" as the South Carolinians insisted. But the South Carolinians were adamant and they sounded out other Southern states on the propriety of calling a Southern convention to enforce the doctrine of nullification against the federal government. This the Galeses opposed. A "Southern Convention," they contended, would "by its tendency to array the different portions of the Union in opposition to each other, pave the way at some future period" for the dissolution of the union.[4]

Failing to obtain support from the other states, South Carolina determined to go it alone and on November 24, 1832, a state convention passed the Nullification Ordinance declaring the Tariff of 1832 null and

[3] Raleigh *Register,* January 20, 1831.
[4] Raleigh *Register,* November 23, 1832.

void. On December 21, the *Register* carried Jackson's proclamation against South Carolina—it had been issued earlier as an extra. The Galeses greeted the proclamation with praise: "It cannot fail, we are confident, to produce a healthy reaction in South Carolina." When the "Nullifying party in that State," they continued, "hear from the President . . . that their conduct is considered *treasonable,* and that he . . . is determined to execute the laws" of the United States "they will count the cost and retreat from their untenable grounds."

On February 1, 1833 the date the Ordinance of South Carolina was to go into effect, the editors of the *Register* expressed doubt "that any steps will be taken to enforce it, until some decisive action occurs in Congress on the subject of the Tariff." But they feared that if Congress should adjourn before a modified tariff act was passed "a collision must inevitably occur between the General Government and our erring sister." In such a situation, the Galeses pointed out, North Carolina would be in a delicate position; "neutrality is out of the question," they asserted. If North Carolina should "refuse to sustain the Executive," she would declare nullification to be "the rightful remedy, [and] if nullification and secession be suffered to obtain in a single State, the Union will be at an end." No, the editors concluded, "if South Carolina . . . should strike the parricidal blow, North Carolina . . . must abandon her to the consequences of her rash and precipitate measures."

North Carolina did not have to make a decision. Before the month was out Henry Clay, "the only man perhaps who could avert the calamities which impend over this once happy Union," introduced in the Senate his bill for "adjustment of the Tariff."[5] On March 5, the *Register* reported that it was "a law of the land." South Carolina accepted this tariff, and the prayer of the Galeses "that the convulsions of civil war may never leave a blot upon the page which chronicles the future history of our Nation," was for the time being answered.[6]

With nullification settled, the editors of the *Register* faced another matter of equal seriousness. In his annual message to Congress in 1829 Jackson had questioned the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States, chartered in 1816 for twenty years, and warned Congress to use caution in granting an extension of the charter. The Galeses objected, for the *Register* had consistently been on the side of the Bank. As the senior Gales declared in the *Register* of February 20, 1818, the Bank was "necessary for the benefit of commerce, the agricultural interests, . . . and of the fiscal concerns of the Union."

In January, 1832, Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank, with the support of Henry Clay, asked Congress for a renewal of the charter, though it had four years yet to run. But it was election year, and Clay

[5] Raleigh *Register,* February 22, 1833.
[6] *Ibid.,* February 1, March 26, 1833.

had chosen the Bank as the issue on which he would break Jackson.[7] The following July the required bill was passed and promptly vetoed by Jackson. Immediately, the Galeses in company with most of the press in the nation entered a vigorous protest. Edward J. Hale, editor of the Fayetteville *Observer,* bluntly declared in his paper of July 24 that Jackson's charges against the Bank were untrue. But the Galeses, while agreeing that the veto message was filled with fallacies and prejudices, were optimistic, for they saw in it the death knell of the Jackson administration.[8] This was the act needed to awaken the people to the evils of a President bent on destroying the vital institutions of the country and rally them to the support of Henry Clay, the man "best qualified for the office & the most decided and able supporter of the American System."[9] The people, however, did not share the Galeses' enthusiasm for Clay and in November returned Jackson to office. The editors, in their *Register* of November 16, complained of the lack of interest manifested by the people, but they insisted that bad weather was responsible for the small vote cast in North Carolina.

With the election over, in the summer of 1833 Joseph Gales decided to turn the *Register* and the other business of the firm over to Weston, his son and partner, and with his wife, Winifred, go to live in Washington. Joseph Gales was now in his seventy-second year. For thirty-four of these years he had lived in Raleigh, where he had achieved a distinguished place in the minds of his fellow citizens. Since 1819 he had served as their mayor and in every public enterprise he had been in the forefront. He had acquired property, position, and good will. Now he felt it was time to withdraw. With perhaps only a few years left to them, Joseph and Winifred Gales desired to spend the time in Washington with their children, whom they had scarcely seen in twenty years. Weston, now married and with three children, needed a larger income. But more important, as devout Unitarians they wished to be near a church of their faith during these declining years.[10]

The people of Raleigh were reluctant to see Joseph Gales go. A public dinner was given for him at the Eagle Hotel. Governor David L. Swain presided, "and nearly every respectable Citizen and a number of friends, from a distance attended," among them Chief Justice John Marshall. Many toasts were spoken, and Gales' life and character were saluted "in the kindest and most flattering terms."[11]

Shortly after arriving in Washington, Gales began editing a "History of the Proceedings and Debates of the early Sessions of Congress," a

[7] Edward Channing, *A History of the United States,* 6 vols (New York, 1907-1925), V, 446.
[8] Quoted in the *National Intelligencer,* August 9, 1832.
[9] Raleigh *Register,* October 27, 1831; October 26, 1832.
[10] Winifred Gales to Jared Sparks, August 10, 1833, Gales Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.
[11] Gales Reminiscences, p. 186.

work subsequently published as the *Annals of Congress* by Gales and Seaton of the *National Intelligencer.* He had finished two volumes when, in January, 1834, he was appointed treasurer of the American Colonization Society, a position he held until 1839.[12]

Left alone, Weston Gales took up Jackson's renewed fight against the Bank. On December 14, 1832, the *Register* had carried Jackson's message to Congress; an excellent document, the editors thought, except for the President's doubt "whether the United States Bank is a safe depository of the public funds." Apparently, they averred, Jackson's prejudice had narrowed his views for, "not content with consigning" the Bank to a premature dissolution, he "seeks to destroy its credit." But this renewal of the fight against the Bank led some to believe that the Bank would be rechartered. This was the attitude of Edward Hale and Weston Gales.[13]

On September 23, 1833, the *Register* reported: "The evil counselors by whom the President is surrounded . . . have prevailed, . . . the Public Deposites will be removed from the Bank of the United States." The worst fears had been realized. Weston Gales was now certain that this "unauthorized exercise of power by the President . . . will bring about the recharter of the Bank, by a constitutional majority of Congress."[14] But such was not to be, and in the *Register* of February 11, 1834, Gales wrote that Jackson had let it be known "that the Deposites will not be restored, and that the United States Bank will not be rechartered under any conceivable modification." Thus, Gales sadly commented, "Congress is reduced to a mere legislative machine, for the preparation of business, to be consummated or not, by the power that assumes the right to rule the destinies of the country." But, he added, the time is "close at hand, when the authors of the mad act which has brought the country into its fearful condition, will be driven from their places."

The condition of the country was indeed bad, for Nicholas Biddle, to force a recharter of his Bank, began to restrict credit and thereby promoted a minor panic. Gales, however, attributed the panic directly to Jackson's removal of the deposits, but he reported that the President looked upon the "distress and embarrassment as *imaginary,* and gotten up for political effect, by the friends of the Bank."[15]

By June the Bank was beaten and Biddle relaxed his credit policy. Jackson's stand had driven a breach in the ranks of the administration party within the state. North Carolina's two senators, Willie P. Mangum and Bedford Brown, divided on the Senate's vote of censure against Jackson; Mangum asserted that the question "is not Bank or no Bank, [but] law or no law, constitution or no constitution." Gales agreed,

[12] Gales Reminiscences, p. 187.
[13] Fayetteville *Observer,* December 18, 1832; Raleigh *Register,* March 26, 1833.
[14] Raleigh *Register,* October 8, 1833.
[15] Raleigh *Register,* February 11, 1834.

adding "that there is greater unanimity among the people of North Carolina in their condemnation of the conduct of the executive . . . than was ever before witnessed."[16]

In the *Register* of September 2, 1834, Gales declared that North Carolina would not support Van Buren were he to run for President; "the delusion is at an end," he asserted, and "a spirit of enquiry is abroad, from which the happiest consequences are every day resulting." In December he learned that the Jackson men were planning a convention to nominate Van Buren. The idea was ridiculous, Gales declared in the *Register* of December 2. The true meaning of such a convention is "to collect a body of men from the different parts of the Union, who will be pledged *before hand* to nominate Mr. VAN BUREN"; to assume that they would assemble to deliberate is absurd. He called upon the opposition to unite; *"it is upon the* WHIG PARTY, its principles and experience, that the Administration of the Government of the country must rest." Later that month Gales endorsed a plan, submitted by a correspondent in the *Register* of December 30, to "create a fund for the sound dissemination of sound political information among the people." It is through wealth and a well organized press, he insisted, that the Jackson party is so successful, for the people "only err from want of necessary light to guide them in the paths of political wisdom which their fathers trod."

On January 20, 1834, the *Register* reported that Judge Hugh Lawson White, senator from Tennessee and former Jackson man, was to be brought forth as a presidential candidate in opposition to Van Buren. Gales commented that "he is a man of sound judgement, distinguished talents, liberal views and unblemished private character, but is rather too closely identified with Gen. Jackson for our taste." Nonetheless, Gales declared that he was for the defeat of Van Buren "by all legitimate means," and if Judge White seemed likely to do it the *Register* would support him.

In May the Jackson men held their convention in Baltimore and formally nominated Van Buren for President and Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky as Vice-President. Gales insisted again that North Carolina would not support Van Buren. In the *Register* of June 2 he wrote that all public meetings held within the state during recent months indicated that sentiment toward the Jackson candidate was on the wane. As for Johnson, Gales thought that his selection over William Cabell Rives of Virginia represented a shabby deal, for Rives was by far the more able and deserving of the two. But this mattered little, Gales observed, for the true question to be decided was: "are the intelligence and virtue of the people proof against Governmental patronage." Van Buren's only claim to office rested on Jackson's predilection for him, and this

[16] *Ibid.*, February 25, 1834.

"*ought to be a conclusive* bar to his elevation," for the President, "thro' the agency of his Star chamber at Baltimore, has dictated to the free people of these United States whom they are to choose as his successor."[17]

At the meeting of the state legislature in December, Whig members met with a number of citizens assembled as a convention and nominated Judge White for President. Gales, in the *Register* of December 29, wrote that White "was selected because the Whigs believe him to be peculiarly indicated by the character of the times as the man to lead the friends of the Constitution, in their great struggle against the power and patronage of corruption." It is dangerous to the freedom of our elections, he insisted, that a "President should be permitted to designate his successor." Judge White held out no inducements for office. It is, therefore, the duty of the "real friends of their country to rally around the sacred charter of their freedom." The same issue carried the story that a Whig convention in Maryland had nominated William Henry Harrison of Ohio for President and John Tyler of Virginia for Vice-President.

Essentially, the campaign was a negative affair. Distribution of the proceeds from the sale of public lands, advocated by the Whigs, was the only positive issue presented. Three years earlier, March 12, 1833, the *Register* had carried the news that Jackson had refused to return a bill passed by Congress providing for distribution. The editors had insisted that the people had a right to know the President's reasons for not signing the bill, and suggested that Jackson inclined toward Senator Benton's plan for giving the Western states the public lands lying within their borders. From this time on the *Register* was committed to a program of distribution. Jackson was accused of favoring the Western states in order to bribe them to support Van Buren for President.[18] During the campaign Gales continued to play on this theme, arguing the constitutional right of the old states to the public domain and emphasizing the opposition of the Van Buren men to this right.

With the Whigs dividing their support among three candidates for President—the Northeast had declared for Daniel Webster—the Democrats charged the party with an intention to force the election into the House of Representatives. Gales, in the *Register* of January 19, 1836, admitted a preference for a House election, rather "than that Mr. Van Buren, backed by the President's recommendation, should take away the election from the people and give it to a packed caucus." Later, however, Gales wrote that the idea was preposterous: "What motive can the friends of Judge White have in wishing the House to decide the question?" he asked. "Would a plain Republican like Hugh L. White, stand any chance there, against Martin Van Buren, the Prince of intriguers?"[19]

[17] Raleigh *Register*, July 28, 1835. [18] Raleigh *Register*, March 12, 1833.
[19] Raleigh *Register*, March 22, 1836.

Abolition, which had now become a prominent issue in politics, entered the campaign, and Gales charged the Van Buren party, as well as the candidate, with favoring the extinction of slavery. "We are assured," he stated in the *Register* of May 10, "that the Abolition Question is the great lever in the hands of the Van Buren party at the North."

The state elections in August resulted in a triumph for the Whig party in North Carolina and the *Register* reflected the party's jubilance. Gales doubled his efforts to discredit Van Buren. In the *Register* of September 15, he charged the New Yorker with being a party to the system of corrupt patronage and uncompromising in his opposition to distribution. Whig triumphs in other states were flaunted as proof that the Democrats had no chance. "Van Burenism is rapidly going down everywhere," Gales declared, "and, by the Ides of November, will have fairly reached the bottom of the hill."[20] But the editor was too sanguine; the *Register* of November 22 carried the news that Van Buren had won the vote of the state and the nation. "We feel mortified and humbled," Gales sadly commented, "and can find no excuse for the reprehensible neglect of those who have contributed, by their inertness, to entail upon the country another four years of misrule."

Van Buren had hardly settled in office when panic swept over the country. Gales was prompt in laying the blame squarely on Jackson's "grand Experiment with the Currency," and called for the chartering of a new national bank.[21] But when Congress met in September in special session Van Buren greeted it with a message advocating an independent treasury, separate from the business of the country and based on hard money. The message was soundly condemned by Gales. "The President endorses," he wrote in his paper of September 11, 1837, "the tenets of the Loco Foco division of 'the party' and subscribes to the pernicious notions of *Tho. H. Benton.*" The design of the administration in presenting "so impracticable a plan," Gales argued, is "to induce the Whigs to bring forward a proposition for a National Bank, which being done, an endeavor would be made to create an issue between the two propositions, and to throw the onus on the Whigs."[22] As for this "sub-treasury scheme," Gales confessed an inability to suppress a smile; it was so ridiculous. In the first place, he wrote in the *Register* of October 2, the President proposes that all money collected by the government be in specie. Then it shall be kept by "Office-holders" wherever it is collected, in their pockets, saddle bags, or in any place suited. It was bad enough, he exclaimed, "to confide the money to *Pet Banks,* but to entrust it to *Pet Partisans* would out-Herod Herod."

The independent treasury failed to win the approval of Congress and for the next three years the issue was continually before the people. Gales was insistent in his advocacy of a new bank, drawing on the experi-

[20] *Ibid.,* September 27, 1836.
[21] Raleigh *Register,* June 6, 1837.
[22] *Ibid.,* September 18, 1837.

ence of the country before 1816, when the second Bank of the United States was chartered, to support his argument. In 1840 the sub treasury became a law, "in spite of the wishes of the People," Gales declared in the *Register* of July 10, but the next year it was repealed.

During the last year of Jackson's administration the people had been given a distribution plan, a Democratic measure which provided for the distribution of the federal surplus to the states in four quarterly installments. This had pleased the editor of the *Register,* though he accepted it as a temporary substitute for a regular system of distribution.[23] Three installments had been paid when the panic hit. The government, facing practical bankruptcy, was forced to cancel the fourth installment. Gales could not go along. If the government needs money to operate, he wrote September 25, 1837, in the *Register,* "instead of repealing an Act *which only gives to the people what they are entitled to,* repeal those Acts which give away millions of the people's money for extravagant schemes of fortifications and other works of like character." He pointed out that the states would suffer severely if this installment were not paid, for many of them had embarked on internal improvement programs and had counted on their share of the surplus to meet commitments already incurred.

The Van Buren party was more concerned with removing a source of government revenue than distributing a surplus. In February, 1837, a proposal was made in the Senate to limit the sales of public lands to actual settlers and to grant them pre-emption rights. This, Gales thought, "ought rather to be denominated a grand National ordinance in favor of SQUATTERS." The plan would break down the whole land system, he argued in the *Register* of February 14, and "destroy the Revenue from that source altogether." It was obviously a plan, he continued, to repay the new states for their support of Van Buren. The following December, in his annual message to Congress, Van Buren suggested that a pre-emption scheme to encourage the settlement of the West be enacted. Gales was indignant and again assailed Van Buren for courting the votes of the Western states.[24] A bill was introduced providing for pre-emption. In the February 5, 1838, issue of the *Register* Gales declared that "Mr. Van Buren wants the votes of the new States, and to obtain them, is willing to barter away the public domain, regardless of the rights of the old States." In June a pre-emption bill was passed and signed by Van Buren. Gales could understand that this bill was pleasing to the new states, but that congressmen "whose constituents are to be despoiled by the unjust and unequal operation of the measure, should quietly submit to it," was more than he could understand. He hoped "that the gross injustice of this Pre-emption law" would rouse

[23] Raleigh *Register,* June-July, 1836.
[24] Raleigh *Register,* December 11, 1837.

the old states to action, "if they are not determined to encourage a system of fraudulent speculation, partiality, perfidy and plunder."[25]

Though national politics and issues were of considerable interest to the Galeses, there were a number of local matters that occupied prominent place in the columns of the *Register*. One of these, internal improvements, was no new issue; but where earlier the Galeses had placed the emphasis on the improvement of waterways and the building of roads, attention was now concentrated on the construction of railroads. This was first indicated in the *Register* of September 7, 1827, when the Galeses invited attention to the first of a series of letters written by Joseph Caldwell, president of the University of North Carolina, under the name of "Carlton." In these letters, published in the *Register* from September 7, 1827, to November 14, 1828, Caldwell described the virtues of a new invention, the railroad, and advocated it as an answer to North Carolina's transportation problem. He favored a railroad running through the center of the state, contending that this would benefit all sections, provide cheap transportation, and open up Beaufort, the state's best port, to the hinterland. The Galeses, while not endorsing the plan editorially, expressed an interest in the letters and continued to direct attention to them in their leaders.

For the time being nothing was done in North Carolina to put President Caldwell's suggestions into practical effect, although his essays were widely copied in the papers of the state. But in June of 1831 an accident occurred that was to lead to action. The *Register* of June 23 reported that the state capitol in Raleigh had been destroyed by fire. The location of the capital at Raleigh had never been completely accepted by some people who favored one of the older towns for the site, and with the destruction of the capitol the malcontents at once began agitation for a removal of the seat of government. Fayetteville was one place prominently considered. It devolved, then, on the citizens of Raleigh, if they wished to keep the capital, "to take some measures, if practical, to gain friends" in the legislature. Joseph Gales, still mayor of Raleigh, hit upon the idea of building a railroad from a stone quarry nearby to the site of the old capitol building. His argument was that it would afford a facility for obtaining cheap durable building stone and thus influence the legislators to rebuild the capitol at Raleigh. Gales suggested the idea to other interested citizens, a company was formed, and construction began. By the time the legislature met in 1832 the railroad was completed and equipped with "a neat Passenger car . . . in readiness to treat the members of the Assembly with a ride on a Railroad." The idea worked "and a bill for erecting a new Capitol of Granite on the old site, was passed by a handsome majority."[26]

This railroad was only a mile and one quarter in length and motive

[25] Raleigh *Register,* July 16, 1838.
[26] Gales Reminiscences, pp. 173-174; Raleigh *Register,* December 28, 1832.

power was provided by horse; yet it had much effect in promoting interest in a more extensive work. As Weston Gales wrote in the *Register* of January 28, 1834, "very many, who have come to the seat of government, from every quarter of the State, have been first convinced of the advantages of Railroads by seeing the enormous masses of stone conveyed as fast and as easily as the empty car could be drawn on good common roads."

Beginning in 1833 the *Register's* columns were filled with plans for railroad lines and the meetings of internal improvement conventions assembled to promote state interest in railroad construction and to petition the state legislature for aid. However, before anything could come of this it was necessary to solve a problem that both vexed and obstructed the passage of any sort of legislation that would promote the character or improve the physical condition of the state. This was the matter of constitutional reform. The state constitution adopted in 1776, through its system of representation, gave the East the control of the government, although since 1830 more than half of the people lived west of Raleigh. Efforts on the part of the West to rectify this inequality met with consistent opposition in the state legislature from the representatives of the East, who were intent on maintaining their ascendancy As a result, Gales concluded that an impasse had been reached on those measures which might unify the state, such as a system of railroads.[27]

Gales supported the demands of the West. In the *Register* of January 14, 1834, he wrote "that unless the grievances complained of" by the western counties "be speedily redressed, the Yeomanry of the West will take the remedy into their own hands." At the meeting of the state legislature in the winter of 1834 a bill was passed providing for a referendum on the question of calling a convention to consider amendments to the constitution. The press of the state at once took up a discussion of the question. Gales had little doubt that the people would decide in favor of the convention, and in the *Register* of March 10, 1835, in anticipation of such a result, he reminded the people of the importance in choosing delegates "distinguished for integrity, patriotism, sound and vigorous understanding . . . without regard to political or personal considerations."

As Gales expected, the people voted for a convention and in June it assembled in Raleigh. Gales promised to give his readers a full account of the proceedings, and the issues of the *Register* for June and the following three months testify to the sincerity of his promise. The only reward he asked was that other newspapers using the *Register's* account give credit, something one or two failed to do.[28] July 11 the convention

[27] Raleigh *Register,* January 14, 1834. See issues of July 9, 23, October 1, 1833, for accounts of meetings of internal improvement conventions and plans for the construction of a railroad from Raleigh eastward. Gales also was concerned with the effect of "improvident legislation" on the increased emigration from North Carolina. Raleigh *Register,* March 11, 1834.

[28] Raleigh *Register,* June 30, 1835.

adjourned, having been in session since June 4; amendments were adopted providing for a popular election of the governor, abolishing religious and property qualifications for voting and office holding, disfranchising the free Negro, and reapportioning representation in the state legislature. Gales approved of these amendments with the exception of the one disfranchising the free Negro, a group, he argued, "who have an interest at stake in the country and a character to entitle them to the privilege" of voting.[29] The people accepted the amendments by a very close vote, the western half of the state voting solidly for them and the eastern half against.[30]

With the adoption of the amendment providing for popular election of governor, state politics could now concentrate on the support of a central figure representing party choice. The emergence of the Whig party in 1834 as the anti-administration party provided the state with two parties committed to genuine programs of opposing interests and candidates, although for the first three gubernatorial campaigns more attention was focused on national issues than state matters. Nonetheless, it can be noted that with the election of Edward B. Dudley, the Whig candidate for governor in 1836, North Carolina entered upon an era of progress in which the Whigs were the definite leaders. The foremost spokesman for this group was the Raleigh *Register*.

The gubernatorial race in 1836 was obscured somewhat by the presidential race. The candidates, Richard Dobbs Spaight, Jr. for the Democrats and Edward B. Dudley for the Whigs, were supported or attacked in the press for their position on distribution, the bank, and affinity for or against Van Buren.[31] However, the Democratic papers never got very enthusiastic in their opposition to Dudley. Thomas Loring, editor of the Raleigh *Standard*, the leading Democratic paper, admitted that Dudley was "one whom we personally love and esteem."[32] The election in August ended in a complete victory for Dudley and the Whigs. However, Gales took greater delight in predicting the outcome of the presidential election in November than in exulting over the triumph of Whig principles in North Carolina.[33]

In 1838 it was very much the same story. The Whigs ran Dudley for re-election and at first it appeared that he would be unopposed,[34] but on July 12, one month before the election, the *Standard* in an extra announced that the Democrats would run former Governor John Branch. Branch had served as Jackson's Secretary of the Navy in his first cabi-

[29] Raleigh *Register*, September 29, 1835.
[30] *Ibid.*, November 17, 24, December 1, 8, 1835.
[31] *Ibid.*, March 22, April 19, 26, 1836.
[32] *North Carolina Standard*, July 7, 1836. A discussion of the Democratic press is given in Clarence Clifford Norton, *The Democratic Party in Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, Volume XXI, nos. 1-2, *James Sprunt Historical Studies*, pp. 12-30.
[33] Raleigh *Register*, August 30, 1836.
[34] *North Carolina Standard*, February 14, 1838.

net, but in the break between Jackson and Calhoun he had followed Calhoun. Now, as Gales claimed in the *Register* of July 16, Branch was "as decidedly as opposed to Mr. Van Buren as Gov. Dudley." In fact, Gales continued, "with the exception of his opinions on the Sub Treasury Scheme" he was "a marvellous proper Whig." The short campaign ended in victory for Dudley. Gales was pleased and interpreted the result as a "triumph of Whig principles."[35]

In the meantime, work had gone ahead on the construction of two railroads. In 1834 the state legislature had chartered the Wilmington and Raleigh road, but the people of Raleigh failed to subscribe their share of the stock needed, and the interests in Wilmington changed the terminus to Weldon on the Virginia border. Gales, meanwhile, had become excited over a road proposed between Raleigh and Gaston, a town also located on the Virginia border. In the *Register* of December 29, 1835, he called attention to a public meeting to be held in Raleigh for the purpose of organizing interest in this undertaking, emphasizing the benefits that would accrue to Raleigh: the increase in property values, improved marketing facilities, expanding population, and, not the least, the investment potentialities of railroad stock. The meeting proved a success; a charter was obtained and on January 18 subscription books were opened.[36]

Work was begun on both railroads during Governor Dudley's first administration, and both were completed in 1840. The *Register* of March 20 carried the story of the celebration attending the completion of the Wilmington and Weldon road, but four days later it announced an event of greater significance to the citizens of Raleigh, the completion of the Raleigh and Gaston road. "Phizzz-zzz-zzz" Gales headlined his story, trying to imitate in type the sound of the first locomotive "that ever snorted amongst the hills of Crab-tree." It was a gala event as the population of Raleigh assembled to greet the train that marked the finish of the eighty-six miles that linked the capital city with Virginia and points north; bells rang, artillery roared, "and the people cheered." Now, Gales remarked, "we jolly Cits can . . . amuse ourselves with Rail Road incidents, until the Assembly meets." Gales had a right to share in the enthusiasm, for the columns of his paper had been active in the promotion of this enterprize built entirely by individual stockholders.[37]

Concerned as Gales was with political matters, there were at times certain news stories that for a brief period diverted attention almost wholly from public events. One of these was the outbreak among slaves in Southampton County, Virginia, known as the Nat Turner Insurrection. First notice of this appeared in the postscript column of the *Register* of August 25, 1831—the postscript column was a section left

[35] Raleigh *Register,* August 20, 27, 1838.
[36] Raleigh *Register,* January 5, 19, 1836.
[37] Raleigh *Register,* March 24, 1840.

open until just before press time for late news. The next issue, September 1, carried a two column story listing the names of the victims and giving the full details of the plot. As yet there was no verification, which served to heighten the tension. The *Register* of September 15 contained a letter from a lawyer in Southampton County which substantiated the details of the September 1 story. However, by this time rumors of another insurrection had reached Raleigh, this one in Sampson and Duplin counties, less than a hundred miles from Raleigh. Some idea of the excitement and hysteria which swept over Raleigh is reflected in this issue and those following for the next month. Raleigh was alerted and put in a full state of defense. The governor's office ordered arms sent to Johnston County, at the request of officials there. Reports arrived that a co-conspirator of Turner's, a white man, had been arrested in Fayetteville and had confessed the plans for a general insurrection among the slaves in that area. From Wilmington came news that the jails were overflowing with Negroes. The Galeses admitted that much of what they printed was rumor, but in the excitement and fear that pervaded the state they were unable to sift the news, so they printed it all.

By the end of September much of the ferment had quieted down; the rumors were discredited, and the news stripped of its exaggeration. The people, of course, were very angry. In the *Register* of October 13, it was reported that the grand jury of the Superior Court meeting in Raleigh had indicted William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator,* and his publisher, Isaac Knapp. This abolition newspaper—begun in Boston, January 1, 1831—had arrived in Raleigh a few days before and had been passed around "as a matter of curiosity." It contained "the most reckless and unjustifiable allusions to the attempted insurrection amongst the Slaves in this State."

In May, 1836, there was a brief flurry of news concerning the Texas War of Independence and the outbreak among the Creek Indians in Florida. Gales gave news of both wars space in the *Register,* but the election of that year was of greater interest. He showed enthusiasm for General Sam Houston's victory over Santa Anna, but he was more pleased when Jackson proclaimed neutrality in regard to American interference.[38] The effect of Texas on abolition sentiment in the North, however, was of greater concern. The possible annexation of this large area which could easily be carved into a number of slave states disturbed congressmen from the Northern states, for this would upset the balance between the slave and free states. One stubborn opponent to annexation was ex-President John Quincy Adams, now a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts. In the *Register* of September 25, 1837, Gales reported that Adams had declared on the floor of the House "that a large portion of the citizens of the North would

[38] Raleigh *Register,* May 24, August 30, 1836.

rather dissolve the Union, than consent" to the annexation of Texas. Gales admitted that he had not realized "how *universal* and *rancorous* the prejudice was" in the Northern states against the institution of slavery. "It absorbs all other party or political distinctions," he declared, and whether men call themselves Whigs or Democrats "they all agree in condemning Slavery as a National sin which ought to be extirpated."

Gales supported the South on this abolition question. In the *Register* of May 2, 1837, he wrote "that the Negroes of the South are better fed, better clothed and are more contented with their situation, than any other laboring class in the world." His answer to abolition attacks on slavery in Washington, the slave trade, and the admission of new slave states was union among the Southern states.[39] When, in December, 1837, Calhoun introduced a set of resolutions in the Senate defending slavery as the constitutional right of the Southern states, Gales agreed with the argument advanced by Calhoun, but he doubted that, if adopted, they would have any practical effect. Instead, Gales suggested, it would be best to avoid all discussion on the matter of slavery, pointing out that already Calhoun's "abstractions" had provoked a counter series of resolutions from the North which "in the most naked and offensive form" outlined the doctrine of the abolition party.[40] But, withal, a discussion of slavery could not be avoided, and the pages of the *Register* for the next twenty years attest to its increasing prominence as a national issue.

In the summer of 1837, as a result of general editorial disapproval of advertisements vilifying private citizens and in an effort to promote better relations among the editors of North Carolina, Gales, Loring, and Thomas J. Lemay, editors respectively of the *Register,* the *Standard,* and the *Star,* called an editorial convention to meet in Raleigh.[41] On November 1, the convention met with thirteen of the twenty-five newspapers in the state represented. Resolutions were adopted establishing uniform charges for job work and advertisements, binding the editors to a code of ethics concerning the use of personal and indecorous language, and prohibiting the publication of letters or advertisements dealing with personal disputes. Enforcement of these resolutions was placed in the hands of the members of the state press, for it was agreed that if any one editor "should go astray" the others were to sever professional relations with him.[42] It is sufficient to note that this code had little effect on the temper of the press after a few years. The next year the Newbern *Spectator,* edited by John Pasteur and R. G. Williams, accused the *Register* of violating the convention resolutions in regard to advertising rates. This was indignantly denied by Gales. Efforts were made

[39] Raleigh *Register,* January 12, 1836.
[40] Raleigh *Register,* January 8, 1838.
[41] *Ibid.,* June 7, 19, 1837.
[42] *Ibid.,* November 6, 1837.

by Edward J. Hale of the Fayetteville *Observer* and Dennis Heartt of the Hillsboro *Recorder* to call a second convention, but nothing came of it.[43]

Whig principles had triumphed on a state level, the *Register* had been successful in supporting constitutional reform, and in 1840 its advocacy of a railroad was realized. Only in the national elections was it still thwarted. The Whig press of the nation began laying plans for 1840 almost as soon as Van Buren was inaugurated, when some of the papers in the North announced William Henry Harrison as the Whig choice for the next election. This premature nomination was objected to by Gales, as was a later one bringing out Daniel Webster.[44] But by 1838 it was apparent that a decision would be made from the names of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and William Henry Harrison, and Gales expressed the opinion that Clay was the favorite of the South.[45] In the summer of that year it was announced that a Whig convention would be held at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in December, 1839. Edward J. Hale, in the Fayetteville *Observer,* suggested that at the congressional elections to be held in 1839 Whigs in each district of North Carolina should vote for delegates to represent them in this convention. Gales concurred and emphasized the idea that Clay was the man who should have the nomination, but he was quick to add that the Whigs would abide by the choice of the convention.[46] In the *Register* of July 20, 1839, and the next two issues, Gales devoted considerable space to a discussion of what he termed the issues before the people: the sub treasury, public expenditures, and public lands. In treating each of the three he traced its background, pointed out the constitutional questions involved, and declared that the Van Buren administration had failed miserably to arrive at solutions that would either protect the rights of the states or promote the general welfare of the people.

The Whig Convention was held the first week in December and the *Register* of December 14, 1839, carried the results of its deliberations. Gales did not conceal his disappointment that Harrison had been chosen over Clay; however, he declared, "the Whigs of the OLD NORTH are Whigs from principle," and if intelligent men "assembled in Convention, have thought proper to present another name" then the Whigs of North Carolina will "zealously sustain the nomination." As for John Tyler, the vice-presidential candidate, Gales was certain he met with "the cordial approbation of all."

There have been many political campaigns since 1840, but none was quite like this one. Issues were concealed beneath conviviality and zany behavior. The editorial remark in the Baltimore *American* that Harrison would be happy in his log cabin with a pension and a barrel

[43] Raleigh *Register,* October 22, 1838.
[44] *Ibid.,* July 10, 1837.
[45] *Ibid.,* February 12, 1838.
[46] Raleigh *Register,* June 11, 1838

of hard cider provided the Whigs with a theme around which they pitched their campaign; it was the party of the common man against the aristocratic Van Buren who had been chosen by the Democrats. Log cabins were constructed everywhere and log cabin clubs held regular meetings. In Raleigh, Gales with lurid type displays chronicled the slogans and jolly events of the campaign. The regular poetry feature was given over to "Log Cabin Lyricks" and the stories of Whig rallies and meetings were written with enthusiastic overtones. The issue of May 8 contained a two column six inch woodcut of General Harrison in full military regalia astride a magnificent horse, the first such illustration to appear in the *Register*. Van Buren was pictured as an abolitionist, an extravagant spender of the public money; his supporters, "political hucksters, who prostitute their offices to vilify and abuse those who have the firmness to defend the Peoples' rights."[47] Harrison was defended "as a man rich in intellectual gifts and rare acquirements; uniting in his character the wisdom of age, with the bouyance almost of youth"; and "ONE OF THE PEOPLE."[48]

It was a gay campaign and the Whigs won. The *Register* of November 13 contained a nine single line deck head to announce the Harrison victory in Pennsylvania, but for the victory in North Carolina reported in the issue of November 17, Gales was less extravagant in type but just as boisterous in sentiment. "Bring out the Baby Waker!" his headline proclaimed; "OLD RIP has been as true as steel to OLD TIP"; North Carolina had cast a "Majority for HARRISON and REFORM."

After twelve years the *Register* was again on the winning side, and to achieve victory Gales and the Whigs had adopted tactics similar to those Van Buren had used against Adams and his supporters—no issues but a constant cry of corruption and reform. Gales wrote:

> No one can rejoice more than *we* do at the success of principles, on which rests as we solemnly believe, the perpetuity of our free Institutions. *We* have been battling for these principles a long time and in the face of extraordinary obstacles; but we have never lost confidence in the ultimate decision of the People. We have suffered a good deal, in our purse and in our feelings, from the intolerant and proscriptive spirit of our opponents; but we have endeavored to solace ourselves with the conviction that we were doing our duty, and that the time would arrive when even our adversaries would acquit us of intentional wrong. We have witnessed, without quailing before his power, a President elected and re-elected, by a majority, which with the force of a Cataract, bore down before it all who refused to worship at the shrine of modified idolatry. But we have steadily pursued the even tenor of our way, occasionally cheered by a streak of light here and there, in the political horizon, until at length, the glorious effulgence of the "perfect day" bursts upon our vision.[49]

[47] Raleigh *Register*, March 20, May 22, 1840.
[48] *Ibid.*, May 22, 1840.
[49] Raleigh *Register*, November 17, 1840.

CHAPTER V

TREASON OF TYLER AND MR. POLK'S WAR

The Register 1841-1848

In the late spring of 1839 Winifred Gales died in Washington, D. C. She and Joseph Gales had been married for fifty-five years. Winifred had been a wonderful companion; successful as a mother, intellectually curious and a brilliant conversationalist, tolerant yet deeply religious, she had created a home that was noted for its charm and hospitality. In 1804 she had written a novel, *Mathilda Berkeley, or Family Anecdotes,* which had been published by her husband at the *Register* office. As one daughter and then another died, Winifred Gales had taken their children into her home to rear and educate. Her seventy-eight years had been full and productive.[1]

Joseph Gales was alone and depressed in spirits. He decided to break up his home and spend the remaining years of his life with his children. But first he resolved to return to Raleigh where he could pass several months in a quiet and retired manner near the scene of many happy years spent with his wife, Winifred. In July, 1839, accompanied by his oldest son, Joseph, Jr., he left Washington; a few days later he arrived in Raleigh.[2]

In January, 1840, the people of Raleigh honored Joseph Gales by electing him their mayor; he had received the nomination of both parties. The next year he was again elected,[3] but death prevented his finishing out the term. On August 24, 1841, at the age of eighty-one, Joseph Gales died. His death was mourned in Raleigh and in the press of the state. Judge William Gaston, Chief Justice of North Carolina's Supreme Court, in a series of resolutions adopted by the board of commissioners of Raleigh, called Gales a public benefactor. Thomas Loring, editor of the *Standard,* summed up the sentiments of the people when he wrote: "When such a man dies, his loss is felt by all around him."[4]

Modest in his pretensions, Gales left in his wake much good will. To his children and grandchildren he left a sizable legacy. "I have

[1] Gales Reminiscences, p. 288; Clement Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," *loc. cit.,* pp. 469-470.

[2] Gales Reminiscences, p. 188.

[3] Raleigh *Register,* January 21, 1840; January 19, 1841.

[4] *National Intelligencer,* August 31, 1841; *North Carolina Standard,* September 1, 1841.

spared no pains to give them a good education, and to afford them all the assistance in my power, to make them useful members of Society,"[5] he wrote in the last year of his life. His property in Raleigh was quite extensive: a number of lots within the town and several thousand acres of land located in Wake County.[6]

Shortly after reaching Raleigh in 1839, Gales dissolved the partnership of Gales and Son, and Weston Gales, who had been the active partner since 1833, became the sole owner. In announcing the dissolution in the *Register* of September 28, 1839, Weston Gales revealed his plans to issue the *Register* semiweekly and on January 1, 1840, the first semiweekly issue appeared. Gales remarked that interest in the new paper had not been "such as to justify sanguine expectations of success; but as the undertaking has its origin more in a feeling of State pride, than in any expectation of great profit," he promised to persevere in it so long as he could do so without absolute loss. The paper was the usual folio, sixteen by twenty-one and a half inches in size, six columns to the page. The subscription price was $5 a year, and advertisements not longer than sixteen lines were inserted at $1. As Gales and Son had done from 1823 to 1830, when a semiweekly was published, Weston Gales continued the weekly *Register* made up from the pages of the semiweekly.

The *Register* that Weston Gales acquired was the oldest journal in North Carolina. Many papers had been founded in the years since the *Register* began but few had survived more than a score of years. In Raleigh the *Star,* begun in 1808, was still being published, as was the *Western Carolinian,* established in Salisbury in 1820. The *Carolina Observer,* founded in Fayetteville in 1816, continued in 1840 as the Fayetteville *Observer,* and in Hillsboro Dennis Heartt, who had started the Hillsboro *Recorder* in 1820, was still publishing it in 1840. These were the only papers that could trace their lineage more than twenty years. On November 10, 1840, Gales listed in the *Register* twenty-six newspapers published in North Carolina. Seventeen were Whig, seven Democrat, and of the remaining two one was a religious paper and the other was typed miscellaneous. All were weeklies.

The *Register* with a total circulation of nineteen hundred[7] was not only the oldest but also the largest paper in the state. In its forty-one years it had increased its page size four inches each way. Advertising, mostly by local firms, had grown from an average of four columns an issue to more than twelve. The advent of the railroad giving Raleigh connections with Virginia prompted commission merchants in Petersburg, Richmond, and Norfolk to take space in the *Register.* At least half of the advertisements were illustrated with appropriate stock cuts.

[5] Gales Reminiscences, p. 203. [6] Raleigh *Register,* April 8, 1842.

[7] The Raleigh *Register,* December 11, 1846, gives the circulation of the weekly as twelve hundred, and the semiweekly as seven hundred.

These cuts reflected the latest development in transportation. In the twenties, for example, the steamboat was a popular cut to advertise the recent arrival of a shipment of goods, but in 1840 merchants used a locomotive under full steam pulling a string of cars piled high with goods. Other than a cut or a two-line initial the advertisements were set without any display. The single column measure was used almost without exception, type size was invariably agate (five and a half point), and the insertions were for the most part short. Raleigh merchants insisted on presenting a complete list of their wares, a custom frowned upon by modern advertisers, but a welcome diversion in the scanty reading diet afforded the newspaper subscriber in 1840. Occasionally some of the more ingenious merchants used a popular political issue to liven up their recital of goods. J. A. Campbell, a Raleigh drygoods dealer, employed the impending veto of the bank bill by President Tyler in this fashion: "The Great Bank Bill and the Veto, yet remain uncertain, but it is very certain that an extensive and rich assortment of Staple and Fancy Dry Goods, can be found at J. A. CAMPBELL'S."[8]

The standby of all advertising was patent medicines, usually contracted for by the year. Each issue of the *Register* contained about two columns of such advertisements. Moffatt's Life Pills, Brandreth's Pills, and Phoenix Bitters—all guaranteed and complete with testimonials—were some of the more common remedies offered. There were patrons of the newspaper who resented these nostrum announcements and the editors of the Greensboro *Patriot* admitted that the advertisements sometimes nauseated them, but they declared they were good revenue and no one could doubt that revenue was needed in publishing a newspaper.[9]

One of the nice things about publishing a newspaper in 1840—and it is still so today—was the gifts showered on the editor. A travelling show always sent tickets, a grateful advertiser presented a sample of his wares, a proud farmer offered a choice selection of vegetables or a ham, and a recently established artisan considered it only proper to give the editor an example of his work. At such times, even in the midst of a rancorous political campaign, the life of an editor became an enviable one.[10]

The advent of the penny papers in New York during the 1830's exerted a remarkable influence on the development of printing presses. The old platen hand pull presses were superseded by cylinder, flat-bed presses turned at first by a crank manned by a stout laborer. Later steam was harnessed to the presses. Where on the old hand press a good man was capable of pulling about two hundred impressions an hour, the new cylinder presses could turn out two thousand impressions an hour. But these presses were slow in reaching the country print shops

[8] Raleigh *Register,* October 8, 1841.
[9] *Ibid.,* January 24, 1840.
[10] *Ibid.,* May 8, 1840.

mainly because the small weekly circulations did not warrant an expensive cylinder press. The *Register* was printed on a Washington handpress. This was an advance design of George Clymer's Columbian press which used a system of levers instead of a screw to obtain pressure.[11] Type was still set by hand. Under the printing methods used it quickly wore out and the discriminating editor who took pride in offering to his readers a cleanly printed paper was forced to acquire new type at least once a year. This would usually produce editorial comment and an appeal for new subscribers.[12] The personnel of the *Register* printing office is not known. Besides the editor there was certainly a foreman of the shop who directed the printing operations. In addition, there was a pressman—in all probability a slave—several journeyman printers, and one or more apprentices.

Circulation problems were a constant source of annoyance. On one occasion subscribers to the *Register* in Randolph County complained that their papers were being held up by postmasters along the way and read before being sent on.[13] However, delinquent subscribers were the greatest plague. In the *Register* of April 27, 1841, Gales wrote: "If all our Subscribers would come up to the mark and pay us our dues, we should be able to extricate ourselves from debt." In 1845 a new postage act was enacted. This permitted free postage on newspapers within thirty miles of their publication; but payments for subscriptions, formerly sent free by the postmasters, were charged postage under this act. Gales invited all subscribers, especially those in arrears, to forward payment at his expense, adding "it is *cheaper* for us to *pay* the *postage,* than to do without the money."[14]

Weston Gales was conscious of the service of a newspaper to the community. He believed that to a great extent the language of the newspaper was the public conversation of the country. For this reason Gales regarded the responsibilities of an editor to his community of major importance. Issues of a critical nature, the activities of Congress, proceedings in the state legislature, leading developments in the news—all these Gales published as befitted a newspaper as a medium of communication. But he did not load his columns with what he called "ponderous articles," preferring instead to give the facts that would be useful to an understanding of the country and its problems. Gales was definitely opposed to the publicity given crime, an innovation in news begun by the penny press in the North. It was his opinion that if less notoriety were given to news of this sort, that if public executions and punishments were abolished, the crime rate would be greatly reduced. But of greater concern to Gales was devotion to party, and toward this

[11] Raleigh *Register,* October 14, 1840. The development of the press is ably told in George A. Isaacs, *The Story of the Newspaper Printing Press* (London, 1931).
[12] Raleigh *Register,* January 1, 1840. [13] Raleigh *Register,* April 28, 1843.
[14] *Ibid.,* July 11, March 21, 1845.

end he made the *Register* the disseminator of Whig doctrines with all the violence and scurrility characteristic of partisan journalism. He maintained that the editor ought to lead the public mind, to act independently of the sentiments of the community if, in his judgment, public opinion was wrong. Yet he cautioned against the press becoming dictatorial. Gales' principles were to maintain the character of an independent press, to oppose "proscription," and to keep a close watch on all power, especially "Executive power." To Gales this could best be accomplished by supporting the Whig party.[15]

It was as a champion of these principles that Gales had welcomed the "glorious effulgence" of the Whig triumph in November, 1840. He, therefore, looked upon the inauguration of William Henry Harrison with a certain amount of pride as a job well done. But the *Register* of April 6, 1841, contained foreboding news. Harrison was seriously ill, and Gales did not conceal his fears that the illness might prove fatal. There was some doubt about Vice-President Tyler for, as Gales observed, "this contingency . . . is a yet untried part of our political system." Nonetheless, Gales concluded by surmising that Tyler would continue the policies of Harrison in the event the President should die. Death, however, had already come to the old soldier and the next issue of the *Register* carried the news. All the rules were turned, presenting a paper draped in heavy mourning. Six columns were used to chronicle the details. Gales headlined his leader "Let the Nation Mourn!"

Tyler's inaugural address dispelled all fears for the future of Whig policies, so Gales thought, and he noted its enthusiastic reception in the Whig press.[16] But Gales, in company with Whigs the nation over, was in for a rude awakening. It came in August. A national bank was one of the cardinal principles laid down by Harrison in his inaugural address and Webster and Clay, who had cherished ideas of ruling the country through Harrison, expected a free hand in making a financial policy under Tyler. In the *Register* of April 20, Gales expressed the opinion of Whig leaders that it was not possible *"any longer,* to dispense with a properly organized and efficient National Bank." But John Tyler, with the infuriating insistence that he was President and not merely a Vice-President filling in for the remainder of a term, had different opinions. A bank bill was passed by Congress in late July. Ten days later Tyler returned the bill with his veto. Gales wrote in the *Register* of August 20: "We did believe that JOHN TYLER possessed too much good sense and patriotism to defeat the wishes of so overwhelmingly a majority of his countrymen, and oppose the obvious interests of the people." As yet, Gales was not bitter and he noted with satisfaction

[15] Raleigh *Register,* September 28, 1839; February 11, 1840; September 12, 1843; March 18, 1845; September 29, 1846.
[16] Raleigh *Register,* April 20, 1841.

that though the Whig press had received the veto with disappointment, there was no denunciation or abuse.[17]

The bank bill was rewritten to meet Tyler's objections and it again passed Congress, but on September 9 Tyler vetoed it also. The Whig program was in ruins. The cabinet which Tyler had inherited from Harrison resigned with the exception of Daniel Webster. Gales received the news with complete approbation. "The nation should be proud of such men," he wrote in the *Register* of September 17; "they are honest men and true patriots, who would, for no earthly consideration, jeopard the interests of their country." The Whigs in Congress then met and read Tyler out of the party. Their address to the people of the United States was carried in the *Register* of September 21. Gales termed it "one of the most important documents ever promulgated to the American public." Every measure, he declared, to which the Whigs had pledged their performance had been carried out; their failure was alone due to "the Loco Foco doctrine of *Executive infallibility*" exemplified with stubborn insistence by John Tyler. The program of the Whigs was laid out and Gales pledged his support: a frugal government, no "Government Bank, but an Institution, capable of guarding the People's Treasure and administering to the People's wants," one term for the President, and the "will of the Nation uncontrolled by the will of one man."

Tyler's record should have warned Gales and the Whigs that he would oppose their program. His every public deed had demonstrated his state rights conservatism. Yet Gales refused to accept these views as reason for Tyler's "strange conduct" in vetoing the bank bills. Instead, Gales insisted it was the President's "vain ambition of building up a *third* party, with a view of his election for a second term."[18] The "minority doctrine" advanced by Tyler, Gales declared, was "opposed to the very first principles of our form of government." If there is not to be a majority rule, he averred, then "we may as well at once quit the trouble of attempting to govern ourselves." As it was, Gales observed, this abuse of the veto power by the President took the power of government from the people, "for here a single individual sets at defiance the wishes of millions." There was no doubt in Gales' mind that such a contingency was hardly "preconceived by those who incorporated the veto power into our constitution."[19]

One measure of the Whig program Tyler did accept, though not in the form intended. This was a distribution bill which combined the elements of both distribution and pre-emption. Clay introduced the bill in Congress in June, but it was bitterly debated in the House and the Senate, finally passing in a form which provided that distribution

[17] *Ibid.*, August 24, 1841.
[18] Raleigh *Register*, September 24, 1841.
[19] *Ibid.*, October 1, 1841.

would not go into effect so long as tariff duties were above twenty percent. Tyler signed the bill in September. Despite its mangled form, Gales greeted the bill with considerable elation.[20]

Distribution was now tied in with the tariff and on July 1, 1842, the Compromise Tariff of 1833 was to expire. The Whig forces introduced a bill in June postponing the reduction of tariff duties to twenty percent from July 1 to August 1, yet providing for distribution to begin at once. This bill passed Congress but was promptly vetoed by Tyler. A move was now made—the first time in American history—to impeach the President. On the motion of John Quincy Adams a committee was appointed which drew up a report, written by Adams, that arraigned Tyler for strangling legislation through the misuse of the veto power. Gales greeted this report as "an unanswerable defence of the course of the Whig Party in Congress," and declared "it strips JOHN TYLER of his false covering and holds him up to the country, as he is, a political hypocrite of the first water, and a moral traitor of the deepest dye." He noted, however, that the report recommended "no action in reference to the state of public affairs, beyond an Amendment to the Constitution, so as to limit the Veto power."[21]

With "Tyler's treason" clearly defined so far as Gales was concerned, interest was concentrated on the next presidential election. Beginning in January, 1842, considerable space in the *Register* was devoted to whipping up enthusiasm for the Whig state convention to be held at Raleigh in April. Henry Clay was invited to attend, and for a number of weeks Gales held out hope to his readers that the Whig leader would accept. But in the *Register* of March 29 Gales announced that Clay would be unable to come. The convention met and John Motley Morehead was nominated for re-election as governor and Henry Clay was nominated for President. Gales placed both names at the head of his editorial column, "there to remain until victory perches on our banner," he declared.[22]

The election of 1842 terminated in partial success for the Whigs in North Carolina. Morehead won handily, but the Democrats gained control of the state legislature. Gales blamed this unexpected turn of events on four causes: apathy of the Whigs, voting the Democratic ticket "from personal considerations," the agitation of "questions of State and local policy," and "the circulation of the most outrageous falsehoods, unequalled ever in the annals of Loco Foco misrepresentation."[23] The latter were charges that Morehead as governor had been extravagant in spending state money on improvements of the governor's mansion, including the construction of an ice house and a chicken coop.[24] However, Gales was convinced that North Carolina would vote for Clay.[25]

[20] *Ibid.*, September 10, 1841.
[21] Raleigh *Register*, August 26, 1842.
[22] Raleigh *Register*, April 8, 1842.
[23] *Ibid.*, August 9, 1842.
[24] *Ibid.*, April 1, 1842; Raleigh *Standard*, May 25, 1842.
[25] Raleigh *Register*, August 12, 1842.

Gales doubled his efforts to promote Clay. In the *Register* of September 28, 1842, he called on all Whigs to circulate Whig newspapers. "This, after all," he declared, "is the great lever in effecting political results." He placed the principles of the Whigs under the name of Clay at the head of his editorial column. These were a sound national currency, an adequate revenue with protection for American industry, a just restraint on the executive power, an equitable distribution of the proceeds from the sale of public lands, an honest and economical administration of the government, and an amendment to the constitution limiting the President to one term.[26] Then, in May, 1843, the *Register* office began printing a cheap campaign paper called *The Whig Clarion,* edited by H. W. Husted. Gales disclaimed any connection with the *Clarion,* insisting that it was merely job work. He was, however, quite enthusiastic about the paper.[27]

On June 2, 1843, Gales noted in the *Register* that Thomas Loring had sold his *Standard* to William Woods Holden, and observed that Van Buren's name had been removed from the masthead of the *Standard,* where it had been for some months. Rumor had it, Gales commented, that Calhoun's name would soon be placed at the masthead of the *Standard.* All this was not surprising to Gales, but the fact that Holden was about "to publish a paper advocating Loco Focoism" certainly was. Hardly a year ago, Gales remarked, Holden "professed to be a thoroughgoing Whig," and he recalled a "handsome eulogium" on Clay which had been received by the *Register* from the new editor of the *Standard.* Gales promised "to serve it up some day" to show "how might unsartin white folks are."[28] Here was an editor who was destined to challenge the pretensions of the *Register* as the leading paper of North Carolina, and ultimately to succeed in that right. But, meanwhile, Gales was content to taunt Holden with the epithet of renegade.[29]

In April, 1844, Clay paid Raleigh a visit. The event had been promised the preceding summer when Gales announced in the *Register* of July 21, 1843, that Clay had consented to "honor the Old North State with his presence." For weeks prior to his arrival the *Register* was filled with encomiums for Clay. A great crowd was expected, and Gales advised those coming to adopt the "Log cabin style of travelling"; that is, prepare to camp out.[30] Clay arrived, and Gales estimated ten thousand Whigs were in Raleigh to welcome him. Holden was more conservative; he placed the number at twelve to fifteen hundred "exclusive of those who were present from the City."[31] Two noble Whig spirits

[26] Raleigh *Register,* October 18, 1842. [27] *Ibid.,* May 12, 1843.

[28] *Ibid.,* June 2, 1843. Holden's newspaper career receives full treatment in Edgar Estes Folk, "W. W. Holden, Political Journalist," unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1934.

[29] Raleigh *Register,* September 22, 1843.

[30] *Ibid.,* March 26, 1844.

[31] *Ibid.,* April 16, 1844; Raleigh *Standard,* April 17, 1844.

were severely injured when a cannon they were firing blew up, but they were rewarded by a visit from the great man. Holden commented that Clay kissed "infants to the number of as many as could be presented to his diminutive mouth."[32]

Clay's greatest impression, however, was made in a letter which he wrote while in Raleigh. It appeared in the *National Intelligencer* of April 27, and the *Register* six days later. In this letter Clay opposed the annexation of Texas on the grounds that it would lead to war, that public opinion did not desire it, and that it was not in the interest of the South since much of Texas was not suited to slavery.[33] That same day, April 27, the Washington *Globe* contained a letter from Van Buren stating his opposition to annexation as likely to involve the United States in war with Mexico.

The Van Buren letter elicited the most comment from Gales. As he pointed out in the *Register* of May 3, almost all Democrats, "particularly their presses, [have] committed themselves in *favor of* annexation." Gales predicted that Van Buren's letter will "fall upon them first like a wet blanket; but after a few high bravados . . . they will quietly sneak back into the traces." Gales was right in his first prediction, but wrong in his second. Democrats on their way to a convention in Baltimore were shocked at their favorite candidate's declaration on Texas. But, instead of sneaking back into the traces, they nominated James Knox Polk of Tennessee as their presidential candidate and declared for the re-annexation of Texas.[34]

Tyler, who was considered a contender for the nomination, was chosen by a group of his supporters, also meeting in Baltimore, to seek re-election. Gales termed the nomination of "his Accidency," as he was wont to refer to Tyler, a farce. Polk's nomination, Gales labelled a tragedy, "for it has *killed* 'Democracy' so dead, that it could not be resuscitated by a galvanic battery." Passing over party stalwarts, Gales continued, the Loco Focos "in a fit of desperation, nominated . . . a man of very moderate abilities, and comparative obscurity." Gales doubted if any member of the Democratic party had ever thought of Polk as a presidential possibility, and he predicted that the Loco Foco organs will be kept "pretty busy, to inform the party *who* their candidate is."[35] The next week Gales observed that the *Standard* was finding it hard to accept the Baltimore nominations, adding that in Raleigh "as every where else, the nomination of POLK and DALLAS is taken like a dose of Ippecac, with a wry mouth."[36]

Meanwhile, the Whig national convention, meeting in Baltimore also, on May 1 nominated Henry Clay for President and with him Theodore

[32] Raleigh *Standard,* April 17, 1844.
[33] Raleigh *Register,* April 30, May 3, 1844.
[34] Raleigh *Register,* May 10, June 4, 1844.
[35] Raleigh *Register,* June 4, 1844. [36] *Ibid.,* June 7, 1844.

Frelinghuysen of New York, a "gentleman of eminent talents, and universally acknowledged integrity" with sound "opinions in relation to the Constitutional guarantees of the South."[37] The *Register* masthead now contained the names of Clay, Frelinghuysen, and William Alexander Graham. Graham was the Whig choice for governor.

Gales declared at one time that the most important question to be decided in the election of 1844 was between a "well-regulated national Bank and the Sub-Treasury."[38] The tariff, too, he regarded as a leading question; he insisted that a tariff was necessary to defray government expenses but admitted that protection was a delicate matter and should be adjusted outside the trammels of partisan demagoguery.[39] But as the campaign entered its final round the single question became the annexation of Texas. This was the chief issue between the gubernatorial candidates, the Whig Graham opposing annexation and his Democratic opponent, Michael Hoke, favoring it. Gales took an unequivocal stand. Texas was not suited for slavery. More than this, he asserted, the United States "must have a limit to [its] acquisition of Territory." If Texas is annexed then there is Mexico and so on. Instead, Gales argued, "let the United States be for this continent, the *Mother of Republics.*" In addition, he contended, there was the public debt of Texas, amounting to $10,000,000 to $15,000,000. With the Democrats opposed to distribution, Gales declared he could not accept their assertion that the United States would receive in return public lands worth $100,000,000. Finally, Gales objected to the speed with which the Texas question had been brought before the people, and suggested that land speculators were the prime movers behind the sudden interest in Texas.[40] The refusal of the Senate to ratify a treaty of annexation submitted by Tyler in June brought congratulations from Gales; "a sufficient number of Senators," he wrote in the *Register* of June 14, "have been found independent enough of Executive influence, and regardful enough of the country's character, to save the Nation from the foul stain which the consummation of this infamous Treaty would have fixed upon it."

The elections in August resulted in success for Graham and the Whigs. Gales announced the result with a decked head in the *Register* of August 9. It was the most important Whig victory yet, he exclaimed; North Carolina had not only elected a Whig governor but a Whig Senate and a Whig House of Commons. These results foreshadowed election returns in November. In the *Register* of November 8, Gales reported with certainty that North Carolina had "gone for CLAY and FRELINGHUYSEN," but he was cautious in proclaiming final victory.

[37] *Ibid.*, May 7, 1844.
[38] *Ibid.*, December 8, 1843.
[39] *Ibid.*, December 22, 1843; May 17, 1844.
[40] Raleigh *Register*, May 21, June 11, July 12, 19, 1844.

His caution proved discreet, for the *Register* of November 15 carried the victory story of James K. Polk. "In the moral government of the world," Gales gravely speculated, "we are daily witnesses that, by the inscrutable decrees of Providence . . . the wicked prosper and the righteous are caused to taste the bitter cup of adversity."

Gales was also chagrined. In the *Register* of May 17, 1844, he had offered a subscription to the *Register* to any one on the condition that if Clay lost it would be free. How many accepted his offer is not known, but Gales noted that following Polk's nomination "his Loco friends, who had begun to subscribe quite liberally . . . ceased to send in their orders."[41] Chided by Holden in the *Standard,* Gales retorted that Clay would have won easily "but for the assistance which Loco Focoism derived from fanatical Abolitionists and vagabond foreigners." He was quite vehement in declaring that the free born sons of America had awakened to the "danger in which the country has been placed by foreign influence, fostered into insolence under the base appeal of demagogues, and unscrupulous partisans!"[42]

In the *Register* of February 7, 1845, Gales advanced the opinion that the "Texas question, as used in the late campaign, was only an appliance of Loco Focoism to draw off the attention of the people from the true issues before them." These issues he defined as the protective tariff. In the North, Gales contended, Polk's strength came from the advocates of a protective tariff, but in the South "he was supported because of his supposed anti-protective principles." Here then, Gales concluded, was the rock on which Polk and his party would split. Meanwhile, Tyler had asked Congress to annex Texas, and a joint resolution which required only a simple majority was introduced in the House of Representatives. After some debate in both the House and the Senate it passed, and on March 1, 1845, Tyler signed it. Gales reported the news with "melancholy foreboding." "We consider war *as one of the certain* results of this step," he wrote in the *Register* of March 4; "God grant! that it may not produce a dissolution of the Union!"

The measure adopted provided for the admission of Texas on the condition that a state constitution accepted by the people be sent to the President of the United States by January 1, 1846. In the *Register* of July 11, 1845, Gales wrote that it was certain that Texas would soon became a part of the United States. Whether Mexico would declare war as a result, he averred, "remains to be seen. We can only say for ourself, that while bitterly deprecating the approaching union, and believing that it will not contribute to either the honor or the prosperity of the Nation," it will be the duty of the United States to protect Texas as a member of the union. In such an event, Gales pledged the support

[41] Raleigh *Register,* June 11, 1844.
[42] *Ibid.,* November 19, 22, 1844.

of the *Register*. In the *Register* of December 30, 1845, he reported that Texas was admitted to the union.

Polk's message to Congress in December, 1845, drew from Gales severe criticism on account of, in his opinion, its war-like tone in regard to Oregon. The Oregon region had been in dispute since the beginning of the century, but after 1825 England and the United States had succeeded in narrowing the issue to a disagreement between themselves over the extension of the United States and Canadian border. Unable to arrive at a satisfactory settlement, the two nations had in 1818 agreed to a treaty of joint occupation. Beginning in the 1830's considerable interest in the Oregon region was aroused by missionaries and promoters in New England. Several groups of settlers moved into the area and by 1843 migrations into Oregon had swelled into a large stream. Agitation soon developed for the United States to settle the boundary dispute with England. The issue was joined with Texas in the election of 1844; Polk campaigned for the "reoccupation of Oregon and reannexation of Texas." Actually, all that was in dispute was the boundary, and the United States in several instances had indicated a willingness to accept the westward extension of the Canadian-United States boundary. This had been offered by Polk to the British minister in Washington, but he declined it. Gales had shown little interest in Oregon and until Polk's message he had given no indication of any concern over a settlement. During the campaign he had ignored the Oregon issue. But now that Polk had demanded the whole of the region, in keeping with his campaign promise, Gales argued that Polk had slammed the door of compromise in the face of England. The only consequence, he insisted, that could come from this was war, "unless indeed, the prudence and wisdom of Congress should save us from so great a calamity."[43]

Gales objected also to Polk's revival of the sub treasury, which had been defeated during the Tyler administration, and speculated on the dire results that would befall the nation in "a war with England under the operation of the Sub Treasury." Polk's recommendations for a tariff meant to Gales "as much free trade as can possibly be obtained without breaking up the party."[44]

In the *Register* of February 27, 1846, Gales accused Polk of a willingness to sacrifice American industry to gain Oregon. He argued that the President intended to reduce the tariff to favor British trade and thereby that nation would be more conciliatory about giving up Oregon. But when the Oregon question was finally compromised along the forty-ninth parallel Gales denied that Polk deserved any credit. "The fact is," he wrote in the *Register* of July 10, 1846, ". . . the settlement was effected in spite of Mr. POLK," for, in transmitting the proposed treaty to the Senate, the President stated that his views on the question

[43] Raleigh *Register*, December 9, 1845.
[44] *Ibid.*

were that "title to the whole of Oregon . . . was not to be abandoned without a sacrifice of honor and interest." Nonetheless, Gales was gratified that the question was settled.

While gratified that the Oregon question was settled, Gales found it unpleasant to report the passage of a tariff bill. This tariff, named for Polk's Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker, placed import duties on a revenue basis. It was a "fatal measure," Gales declared in the *Register* of August 4, 1846, that struck at the root of all American industry "and at the living of every man . . . who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow."

On May 9, 1846, a Mexican patrol attacked a detachment of American troops in a disputed area between Texas and Mexico. The first reports in the *Register* rallied American patriotism "with reference to the blunders of the Administration."[45] But Gales was quick to advance the question of why Polk sent an army "into the very country of the Mexicans." He must have known, Gales insisted, that Mexico would resent this invasion. If it was the President's intention to provoke a war, Gales declared, this "unnecessary and rash conduct" represents "an usurpation of power, not granted by the Constitution."[46]

The Mexican War marked the beginning of modern war correspondence. The telegraph, at the outbreak of the war, extended as far south as Richmond, Virginia. Between there and New Orleans, the base for the American armies, communication was largely by post riders. To speed the news a number of newspapers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York established a line of express riders between Richmond and New Orleans. But reliance for the actual news was placed on the New Orleans newspapers, and here the *Picayune,* the *Delta,* the *Crescent,* and, to a lesser extent, the *Tropic,* and the *Bee* rendered notable service. The *Picayune* was edited by George Wilkins Kendall, a former associate of Horace Greeley, and Francis Lumsden, at one time an apprentice on the *Register* and later the *National Intelligencer.* Kendall, sometimes called the first American war correspondent, and Lumsden both accompanied the American armies in Mexico, writing their stories at the scene of the battles and dispatching them by pony express or fast boat to New Orleans. In addition to this first-hand reporting, soldier correspondents were in constant communication with not only the New Orleans papers but those in other sections of the country. Still, in spite of this enterprise of American newspapers, news was slow in reaching American readers. The long and dangerous routes across Mexico or the Gulf to New Orleans and then by fast horse to Richmond made even a two week hiatus in news uncommonly fast. For example, the

[45] Raleigh *Register,* May 15, 1846.
[46] *Ibid.,* May 19, June 23, 1846.

battle of Buena Vista was fought on February 22, 1847, but it was first reported in the Raleigh *Register* on April 2.[47]

Most of the dispatches from the war front printed in the *Register* were credited to the New Orleans papers. Occasionally Gales would rely on a traveller passing through Raleigh for a late item of news, but he usually regretted it as the news had lost nothing in the telling.[48] Letters from soldiers in the field supplemented the regular newspaper accounts, and official dispatches released by the government were depended upon for confirmation of all stories. Gales made some effort to define new words such as chaparral as they appeared in the news, recognizing that many of the descriptive terms used were totally foreign to his readers.[49]

The Mexican War brought into common use among newspapers headlines of multiple decks, employed so effectively by Gales in the election of 1840. Hence, nearly all the big stories concerning the war appearing in the *Register* were headed by two-column wide displays with two or more single line decks.

Gales was unstinted in his praise of Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott, favorably comparing the latter as a military leader with Napoleon Bonaparte.[50]

While Gales was enthusiastic in his treatment of the exploits of American troops in Mexico, he was exceedingly hostile to the conduct of President Polk in Washington. Polk's "studious neglect" of Taylor and jealousy of Scott, whom he had sent to "supersede" Taylor, and his abortive plan to push Benton into command of the American forces in Mexico provoked Gales to a bitter denunciation of the President. "Rome could hold but one *Caesar,*" he wrote in the *Register* of April 2, 1847, "and the United States must have but one *Polk.*" Gales soundly ridiculed Polk's efforts to end the war by accepting Santa Anna's promise that if he were allowed to enter Mexico he would make a peace with the United States, especially after the wily Mexican assumed leadership of his country's forces.[51] Finally, the delay in making peace following Mexico's defeat in September, 1847, led Gales to charge Polk with having intentions "to 'swallow' the Mexican Republic, and rob her of her nationality."[52]

With great rejoicing Gales reported the ratification of the treaty ending the war in the *Register* of March 15, 1848. The war gave the Whigs a presidential candidate but revived an issue that ultimately would destroy the party. In the *Register* of February 23, 1847, Gales had reported that the House of Representatives had passed a bill granting the

[47] This summary of newspapers in the Mexican War is based on accounts in Mott, *History of American Journalism,* pp. 248-250.
[48] Raleigh *Register,* May 29, 1846.
[49] Raleigh *Register,* May 29, 1846.
[50] *Ibid.,* September 18, 1847.
[51] *Ibid.,* April 23, 1847.
[52] Raleigh *Register,* January 29, 1848.

President an appropriation to "buy a peace" with Mexico. This bill was in answer to a request from Polk for $2,000,000 to induce Mexico to cede land. Attached to the bill, Gales observed, was a proviso that prohibited slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico. This was the means used by David Wilmot, a Pennsylvania Democrat, to regain local popularity lost by supporting his party's low tariff measures. Though the bill passed the House, it failed in the Senate. The transaction aroused in Gales a suspicion "as to what is to be the final result of this Mexican War." He feared "that Southern rights and Southern interests, will be sacrificed to *party* influence and *party* aggrandizement." The support given the proviso by members of both parties from the non-slaveholding states convinced Gales that the South could expect no justice from either party on the question of slavery. "It is time for party distinctions to sleep," he declared in the *Register* of February 26, 1847, "and for the South to present a united front." By this Gales did not mean anything like a dissolution of the union, for he insisted that "we believe the Union indispensable to every portion of it." Separation would not only be a prelude to a bloody civil war, he continued, but would make the nation "an easy prey to any foreign power." And he concluded by warning hot heads that the value of the union was too sacred for the idle talk of separation; instead, there should be an end of this bickering over the subject of slavery.[53]

General Zachary Taylor, who owned a plantation in Mississippi, attracted interest early in the war. Since he was a Whig in politics and there were rumors that he was available presidential timber, Polk sent General Winfield Scott to take Mexico City, and depleted Taylor's forces to supply Scott with troops. But Taylor, greatly outnumbered, defeated Santa Anna at Buena Vista. The news of this magificent victory magnified Taylor's reputation. Within a month state Whig conventions had nominated him for President. Taylor, in a letter printed in the *Register* of June 4, 1847, claimed no qualifications for the presidency, disavowed any aspirations for the office, but agreed to serve if the people wanted him.

For a time there was some question as to which party would nominate the General, and there were those who believed he might receive the support of both parties. In the *Register* of July 9, 1847, Gales thought that indications "seem to foretoken an election for the Presidency, without the competition of rival candidates." Taylor, too, at first insisted he would be no party candidate, but he soon discovered there was no other kind. Furthermore, the Democratic party split over slavery; one faction nominated Lewis Cass and adopted a platform with no mention of slavery. The other, organized as the Free Soil party, adopted a platform prohibiting slavery in the territories, but advocating free distribu-

[53] Raleigh *Register,* March 12, 1847.

tion of public lands to actual settlers, internal improvements and a protective tariff, and nominated Martin Van Buren for President. On June 7, 1848, the Whig convention gathered at Philadelphia and nominated Taylor. The news was relayed to the *Register* by telegraph, which had been extended to Raleigh by January, 1848.[54] William W. Holden commented in the *Standard* of June 14 that "Gen. Taylor who owes all his reputation to a war denounced by the Whigs as 'unconstitutional and unnecessary, unjust and damnable' has been . . . placed before the country by the Whigs, as their candidate for President . . . without one single political principle known to or understood by the people!"

Meanwhile, the Whigs in North Carolina were faced with formidable opposition from the Democratic nominee for governor. In 1846 the Whigs had carried the state easily behind Graham running for re-election,[55] but in 1848 the Democrats chose David S. Reid as their nominee and adopted a platform opposing the Wilmot Proviso.[56] The Whigs nominated Charles Manly. When the campaign opened Reid introduced the question of free suffrage, the abolition of property qualifications in voting for state senator. Gales at once called the issue "a lamentable specimen of political charlatanry."[57] Responsibility for the issue he laid on Stephen Arnold Douglas of Illinois, whose wife was related to Reid. Douglas, who visited North Carolina on occasions, had attended the Democratic convention in Raleigh that nominated Reid. He may have recognized free suffrage as a popular issue and suggested it to Reid. Gales, however, was sure that the issue was not "the offspring of North Carolina honesty," but the product of some brain "more prolific of disorganizing and disloyal schemes," and he suggested that Douglas, "taking compassion on that 'ignorant and benighted' condition" under which he was told North Carolinians labored, "may have deigned to enlighten our Loco Foco friends . . . ."[58] Manly made his campaign on "the unnecessary and unconstitutional war with Mexico, brought on by Loco Foco usurpation and recklessness."[59] Free suffrage proved a popular issue and in the August elections the Democrats won a substantial victory, though Manly was elected by a close margin. The *Register* refused to recognize the importance of the free suffrage question and blamed the reverses on "the lethargy, supineness and negligence of the Whigs."[60]

The presidential campaign was waged almost wholly on the issue of the Wilmot Proviso. Cass and the Democrats were charged with opposing Southern interests and Southern Democrats were accused by Gales of submitting "to the Abolitionists and the Wilmot Provisoists" at the Democratic national convention.[61] With the Democratic party

[54] Raleigh *Register*, May 31, June 10, 1848.
[55] *Ibid.*, August 14, 1846.
[56] Raleigh *Standard*, April 19, 1848.
[57] Raleigh *Register*, May 20, 1848.
[58] *Ibid.*, June 28, 1848.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.*, August 16, 1848.
[61] Raleigh *Register*, June 10, 1848.

split and the preference of Southerners for a Southern man, Taylor won, even though his running mate, Millard Fillmore, a New Yorker, was questioned by Southern Democrats on his soundness on the slavery question.[62] Holden, in the *Standard* of November 15, attributed the defeat of Cass to his being a Northern man, in addition to the military renown and popularity of Taylor among the Democrats.

With victory in the presidential elections perched for a second time on the *Register's* banner there was no Weston Gales to rejoice. On July 23, 1848, at the age of forty-four, the editor died. He had been sick for several weeks and had gone to Old Point Comfort, Virginia, in search of health at that popular resort. Despairing of a speedy recovery, he left for Raleigh and had returned as far as Petersburg when he collapsed and died within a few hours. It was a great shock both to his family and to the people of Raleigh, who had not realized the seriousness of his condition.[63]

Death removed from the press of North Carolina one of its "brightest ornaments." The community of Raleigh was stunned. Merchants closed their doors and the entire city seemed veiled in sadness as friends and family escorted the remains of the late editor to his final resting place. From New York to New Orleans editors noted his passing with sorrow. He was remembered as one of the most discreet and courteous gentlemen of the American press; an editor endowed with a quick, clear, and strong sense of judgment; an ardent patriot and a zealous and able advocate of liberal principles. Many remarked of his fine spirit of generosity, his devotion to the interests of the community, and his willingness to help the younger members of the craft. All agreed that North Carolina had lost a valuable citizen while the press had lost one of its ablest representatives. As the editor of the New York *Express* wrote: "The death of such a man is a public calamity."[64]

With the death of Gales the Whig editors of North Carolina were left without a recognized leader. His conduct of the *Register* had left little to be desired. Aware of the responsibilities falling on those who direct a newspaper, Gales had maintained ideals that few editors aspired to. He deplored the publicity given by some newspapers to the lurid details of murder and assault. In reporting crimes committed in Raleigh he declined to publish the details until after the guilty persons were tried, to avoid prejudicing the community and to insure a fair trial. He met all movements designed to better the cause of humanity with the editorial approval and support of the *Register*. Like his father, he served as mayor of Raleigh and was the only Whig who was ever elected

[62] *Ibid.*, November 11, 15, 1848.
[63] *Ibid.*, July 26, 1848.
[64] *Tribute to Weston Gales* (n.p., n.d.), p. 23. This collection of newspaper comments on the death of Weston Gales published in pamphlet form is in the pamphlet collection of North Caroliniana at the University of North Carolina.

to the legislature from Wake County before 1848.[65] For the cause of the Whig party Gales' editorials supporting party candidates and issues set the tone for the Whig press of the state. Bitter and uncompromising, ready and forcible, he was just and sincere. In the words of one editor, "all the ends he aimed at, were his Country's, his God's and Truth's."[66] The people of Raleigh lost a friend and benefactor, but the Whig press "lost a strong and faithful standard-bearer of their principles, whose ability as a political leader was accompanied and set off by all the private virtues that enoble human nature."[67]

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 26. For evidence of Gales' service see Raleigh *Register*, January 20, September 12, 1843; January 24, 1845; January 23, 1846.
[66] *Tribute to Weston Gales*, p. 15.
[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

CHAPTER VI

COMPROMISE TO SECESSION

The Register 1849-1863

With the death of Weston Gales his son Seaton became the editor of the Raleigh *Register.* Sharing top honors with a classmate, Seaton had graduated from the University of North Carolina the month before his father's sudden death in July, 1848.[1] He was born in Raleigh, May 17, 1828, and was the first college trained editor in North Carolina. Only twenty years old when he became editor of the *Register,* he was looked upon by his brother editors as a mere boy.[2] However, several agreed that he possessed the talents of the family and showed promise of developing into a first rate editor.

It had been Weston Gales' wish that his son should succeed him, and plans had been made for Seaton to enter the *Register* office to learn the trade at the side of his father. The unexpected death of the elder Gales interfered and Seaton was confronted with the question of whether to continue the family tradition or to allow the Gales name to be dropped from the *Register.* While aware that he lacked the experience necessary to conduct a newspaper, Seaton resolved to accede to his father's wishes. With the aid of his foreman Thomas Covington, who had been with the *Register* since 1829, Seaton assumed the editor's post August 2, 1848.

In July, 1849, Seaton obtained full control of the *Register.* The following October he enlarged the paper and the next spring began regular telegraph service, making the *Register* the first paper in North Carolina to utilize this new medium.[3]

On October 23, 1850, Gales announced plans to publish a daily edition of the *Register,* "entirely independent of [the] Semi-Weekly or Weekly issue," during the meeting of the state legislature. On November 19 the *Daily Register* appeared—the first daily to be published in North Carolina. The subscription price was $1.50, payable in advance. It was issued from November 19, 1850, to January 29, 1851, and published every day except Monday. The paper was eleven and three-eights by sixteen and three-quarters inches in size, four columns to the page. Gales had hoped for at least four hundred subscribers, but this was never realized. Nonetheless, his enterprize was rewarded, for he

[1] Raleigh *Register,* June 7, 1848.
[2] Raleigh *News,* November 30, 1878; Raleigh *Standard,* March 5, 1853.
[3] Raleigh *Register,* July 4, October 27, 1849; April 17, 1850.

managed to bring the combined circulation of the *Register*—the daily, semiweekly, and weekly—up to two thousand.[4] With the end of the *Daily Register* Gales promised to resume it on a more extended scale two years later, and on several occasions he renewed the promise, but the *Daily* was never revived.

Seaton Gales succeeded to the editorship of the *Register* in time to rejoice in the Whig national victory in November, 1848. For him and for Whigs generally it was to be a hollow victory. The old Whig issues of a national bank, a protective tariff, internal improvements, and distribution were smothered by the rising tide of the slavery controversy. For a Whig newspaper to steer a course through the churning seas of sectional discord whipped up by the storm over extension of slavery required all the skills of a veteran editor, and Seaton Gales was but a fledgling.

When David Wilmot moved that a proviso be adopted to an appropriation bill by Congress to bar slavery from all the lands acquired from Mexico, an era in the history of the United States ended. No longer could cautious politicians keep the slavery issue down. Weston Gales had noted that Northern members of both parties were united in their praise of the Wilmot Proviso; with equal severity Southern Whigs and Democrats combined to denounce the measure as an invasion of their constitutional rights.

Seaton Gales adopted a moderate tone; he rebuked those who talked so freely of dissolving the union. Gales favored a compromise and objected to any action that would handicap Congress in reaching one.[5] As for the right of Congress to legislate on slavery in the territories, he pointed to the Missouri Compromise accepted by precedent and law. "If the right to exclude slavery is constitutional for one Territory," he asked in the *Register* of January 27, 1849, "is it not for all?" But the argument was really academic, Gales continued. "California and New Mexico, no more than Oregon, are incapable of becoming Slave States." Their organic laws were against slavery, the prejudices of the people there were opposed to it, "and nature has interposed an insuperable bar to its introduction."[6] So long as Congress did not interfere with the domestic institutions within the state, Gales argued, it mattered not at all to the South whether the Wilmot Proviso was adopted; its passage "will not limit Slavery one inch, and its non-passage will not extend the institution."[7]

In the spring of 1848 gold was discovered in California. News of the find reached the East the next fall, and Polk mentioned it in his annual message to Congress in December.[8] The rush was on as thou-

[4] *Ibid.*, November 23, 1850.
[5] Raleigh *Register*, January 10, December 20, 1849.
[6] Raleigh *Register*, June 20, 1849.
[7] *Ibid.*, January 27, 1849.
[8] *Ibid.*

sands the world over swarmed into California. The gold fever even touched Raleigh. A company of one hundred persons, men and women each contributing $200, was formed by Joseph B. Hinton to buy a ship and sail for California. Urging single women to join the trek, Hinton pointed out that "*wives* stand at the head of the list" of things most wanted in California.[9] Ship owners from Norfolk and other port towns advertised in the *Register* for passengers and freight bound for the Golden State. The Union Hotel in San Francisco became a regular advertiser and the North Carolina Bookstore in Raleigh listed travel accounts and guide books about California among the volumes regularly offered for sale.[10]

The large influx of people into California made the need for a government imperative. A popular election was held, and in the fall of 1849 a constitutional convention drew up a frame of government containing a clause prohibiting slavery, which was ratified by the people.[11] "Thus has the much vexed question of Slavery in California . . . received its final settlement," Gales wrote in the *Register* of November 21. He predicted that California would apply for admission into the union as a state. In his message to Congress in December President Taylor recommended that the new state be admitted and that New Mexico and "Deseret," the Mormon settlement in Utah, be admitted as territories without reference to slavery. Gales concurred.[12]

Congress greeted Taylor's proposals with such an outburst that many feared that only disunion could result. A meeting called by Mississippi for the slave states to assemble in Nashville, Tennessee, in June, 1850, "to devise and adopt some mode of resistance" to the aggressions of the North lent some assurance to these fears. Gales hesitated to support this Southern convention, "seeing that, on the one hand . . . it might work infinite and irretrievable injury; and on the other, that wisely and discreetly directed, it might be productive of much good." Accordingly, he cautioned North Carolina to wait before committing itself to send delegates until it was made clear the purposes for which the convention was called.[13] His Democratic opponent William W. Holden, in the *Standard* of January 16, had no reservations. The Nashville Convention, Holden declared, was "of first importance to the South and the Union, and North Carolina ought, by all means, to be represented in it."

In the *Register* of February 9, Gales quoted the Wilmington *Commercial* as stating that if the Nashville Convention assumed "to make a decree about a Southern Confederacy . . . it will be the greatest humbug of the age, and do more mischief to the Southern cause, than all the

[9] *Ibid.*, February 10, 1849.
[10] *Ibid.*, February 7, 1849; September 11, 1850.
[11] Raleigh *Register*, October 22, November 27, 1849.
[12] *Ibid.*, December 29, 1849.
[13] *Ibid.*, January 23, 1850.

abolitionists in the world." From this point on Gales condemned Southern Rights meetings held in North Carolina, took a decided stand against the Convention, and bitterly assailed the *Standard* for supporting it.[14] To fortify his position, Gales reported in the *Register* of March 2 that of sixty papers published in ten slaveholding states received on his exchange, not more than fifteen favored a Southern Convention.

Meanwhile, there were those in Congress who recognized that heated debate over the admission of California was useless. It was already free, and nature had acted long before to make Utah and New Mexico unsuitable to slavery. For the third and last time the great compromiser Henry Clay raised his voice "in behalf of his country." He offered in the Senate a series of resolutions: California to be admitted as a free state, New Mexico and Utah to be organized as territories with no mention of slavery, the slave trade to be abolished in the District of Columbia, the Fugitive Slave Act to be strengthened, and a boundary dispute between Texas and New Mexico settled in favor of New Mexico with the Texas debt to be assumed by the United States in return.

Gales was disappointed. In the *Register* of February 6, he published the resolutions, and termed them "far short of . . . a fair compromise between the North and the South." He took hope, however, in the belief that Clay intended them only as "a basis for Bills hereafter to be framed, that may perhaps furnish us some greater security." Holden declared that he had hoped "Mr. Clay would step forward, with something . . . that both sections could agree to, and that would allay this dangerous and fearful agitation."[15]

On February 5, Clay began debate on his resolutions. Gales published the speech in the *Register* of February 13, "to the exclusion of much other matter." Gales was thrilled to see "the whole energies of [Clay's] gigantic mind . . . directed to the one great object, the preservation of the Union." Already, he declared, the skies appeared brighter, and there were indications of a better state of feeling at the seat of government. But extremists were not satisfied and Calhoun presented the Southern position. He repudiated all suggestions made for a settlement and demanded that the North concede to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, faithfully fulfill the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, and accept an amendment to the constitution "which will restore to the South in substance the power she possessed of protecting herself, before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this Government."[16]

Calhoun's plan was not clear to Gales, and he doubted that it would "be comprehended by the people." He failed to see how Congress could force the people of a territory to accept slavery since a "territory, in

[14] Raleigh *Register,* May 18, 1850.
[15] Raleigh *Standard,* February 13, 1850.
[16] Raleigh *Register,* March 13, 1850.

organizing a State government, has the right to admit or reject Slavery, just as it pleases." As for an amendment to restore the equilibrium between the North and the South, Gales argued that whatever provisions were agreed upon in such an amendment would never be accepted by the people.[17]

One other member of the great triumvirate was to be heard from. On March 7, Daniel Webster spoke for the union. This was "the great effort of the present session," Gales declared in the *Register* of March 13, and will be hailed "as a most important contribution to the cause of conciliation and harmony." While not agreeing "with Mr. Webster in his opinions on slavery . . . and the propriety of its further extension," Gales admitted that this was no cause for censure, since the South had no intention to force the North to think as it did, only that the North be willing, "like Mr. Webster, to carry out faithfully all the provisions of the Constitution."

The position of the Northern extremists was presented last. William H. Seward of New York denounced Clay's program and assumed the ground "that there [was] a power . . . behind, and superior to the Constitution." This was the "vilest and most dangerous speech" that Gales remembered ever to have seen anywhere. "Stealthily, yet deliberately," Gales cried, "this miserable fanatic and demagogue approaches and endeavors to prostitute the vital principle upon which our very institutions are based."[18]

On April 24, Gales reported that the Senate had appointed a committee of thirteen members to "devise some effectual and speedy method of ridding the country from the unhappy agitation that convulses it." Clay was named chairman and Webster was one of the members. Gales labeled the committee "an eminently conservative set." The committee reported May 8, and its recommendations followed the resolutions offered by Clay. Gales thought the report moderate and impartial, and from his observations it appeared "to have been received with general favor by the Press and the People."[19]

The Southern Convention at Nashville assembled June 4. The *Register* reported the proceedings in telegraphic dispatches. Southern enthusiasm had dwindled and the attendance was much less than had been expected. Under the conservative direction of Judge William L. Sharkey of Mississippi, nothing radical was done. The Convention adopted a series of resolutions, issued an Address, and adjourned to await the outcome of Clay's compromise measures in Congress. Gales dismissed it with the comment: "The Nashville Convention has thus had its say and adjourned. Its inception was unwise and iniquitous—its deliberations did not excuse the error of its calling—and it can only

[17] *Ibid.*
[18] Raleigh *Register*, March 20, 1850.
[19] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1850.

be remembered, as its prototype—*the Hartford Convention*—is remembered, to be condemned and deprecated."[20]

Meanwhile, President Taylor had come under the influence of Seward, and he threatened to veto any agreement which did not contain the Wilmot Proviso. But here Providence intervened when on July 9, 1850, the President died. Gales received the death of Taylor with appropriate mourning and for the next two weeks the *Register* was issued draped in black. There was a suggestion of a warning from the Almighty in this sudden death of the President, Gales averred, and "who can tell but what it may have a salutary effect in calling the people to their senses."[21] Whether the warning was heeded may be questioned, but the elevation of Millard Fillmore to the presidency had a salutary effect on the progress of the Compromise measures.

One by one the bills that formed the Compromise of 1850 were taken up and passed, comprising in substance the report of the Committee. Gales hailed their passage "as the harbinger of Peace," and he hoped that Heaven would grant "that the Ocean of sectional strife may long sleep profound and undisturbed." An extra was issued to convey "the gladdening news of the passage."[22]

Georgia now became the focal point of interest. The state legislature had instructed the governor to summon a convention of the people should California be admitted into the union with slavery prohibited. Gales had no doubt that a convention would be called, but he strongly doubted that any violent measures would be taken.[23] He was right; the *Register* of December 21 announced that Georgia, although disapproving of the compromise measures, had accepted them but declared that on the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law depended the safety of the union. Gales already had taken the same position. "We do not hesitate to say," he wrote in the *Register* of November 13, "that in the event of the continued nullification, or the repeal, of the Fugitive Slave Law, the Union *ought not to* stand."

While the Compromise was being debated in Congress, Whigs and Democrats in North Carolina were engaged in electing a governor. The Whigs nominated Charles Manly for re-election and the Democrats brought out David S. Reid, their unsuccessful candidate in 1848. The issue of free suffrage was again introduced.[24] The campaign was brief but decisive. Gales charged Reid with favoring the Wilmot Proviso and being opposed to internal improvements. Reid labored the free suffrage issue. Free suffrage was the better issue and the election returns proved it; Reid was elected by one of the largest votes given a gubernatorial candidate up to that time. Also, the Democrats

[20] Raleigh *Register*, June 5, 8, 26, 1850.
[21] *Ibid.*, July 17, 1850.
[22] *Ibid.*, September 11, 14, 1850.
[23] Raleigh *Register*, September 18, October 2, 1850.
[24] *Ibid.*, June 5, 15, 1850.

won a majority in both houses of the legislature.[25] Gales sought an explanation, but ignored the popularity of free suffrage. He accused the Whigs of not voting or of voting for Reid because of personal reasons.[26]

The Compromise of 1850 was the last effort of the Clay and Webster generation to avoid disunion. Before the compromise measures were reported by the Senate committee the great nullifier Calhoun had died. On April 3, 1850, the *Register* appeared bordered in heavy black; "Another of the bright lights of the country is extinguished forever! JOHN C. CALHOUN is no more." Two years later, on July 3, 1852, the *Register* again was issued with turned rules, this time in memory of Henry Clay who had died a few days before on June 29. Then on October 27, 1852, the *Register* reported the death of "the greatest intellect of the age"; Daniel Webster had died three days before. "Thus passeth away the last of that triad of intellectual giants . . . ," Gales wrote; and he added, "we see but little prospect of perpetuating the race, which dies out with the loss of CALHOUN, CLAY and WEBSTER." What Gales did not see was that there was also little prospect of perpetuating the Whig party, which was dying too.

The Whig party began to crumble before the election of 1852. On November 8, 1851, in discussing the approaching session of Congress, Gales speculated that most of the session would be spent in political maneuvering for the presidential election. He believed that the Democrats would choose between Cass, Buchanan, Houston, and Douglas, and that Douglas had the best chance. As for the Whig choice, he considered it beyond doubt that President Fillmore was preferred by the Southern and Western Whigs and a large portion of the Conservative Whigs of the North. However, one thing was certain, he declared; the Whigs as a national party would not support a man "who is either *afraid* or *unwilling* to declare in the most explicit terms, HIS ADHESION TO THE COMPROMISE as a final settlement of the vexed and various questions to which it relates!"

The state Whig convention met in April, 1852, and adopted resolutions supporting Fillmore for President and William A. Graham for Vice-President, asserting that the man nominated must come out "unequivocally for the Compromise!" The national convention met in Baltimore, June 16. For fifty-two ballots Fillmore and Webster divided the votes, for the most part pro-compromise. Then the Seward Whigs, later to become Republicans, were able to nominate General Winfield Scott; Graham was named as his running mate. Gales was disappointed in Scott's nomination, and he did not hesitate to say so, but he took refuge in the declaration that the Whigs "love their country more than

[25] Raleigh *Standard,* August 7, 1850.
[26] Raleigh *Register,* August 10, September 7, 1850.

they love any particular man," and he promised that North Carolina would support Scott.[27]

Two weeks before, meeting in Baltimore also, the Democratic convention "took refuge from its embarrassments in utter obscurity" and nominated Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire for President and William Rufus King for Vice-President. Gales remarked in the *Register* of June 12 that Pierce "is said to be . . . a man of few ideas, and decidedly prone to a rigid adherence to ready-made formulas, conveniently adapted to save the trouble of any laborious exercise of reason or a wise and comprehensive statesmanship."

Meanwhile, the two parties in North Carolina had chosen candidates for the gubernatorial race. The Whigs nominated John Kerr and endorsed a plan calling for a convention to decide the question of free suffrage.[28] The Democrats chose Reid for re-election, called again for free suffrage, and affirmed the willingness of the party to abide by the Compromise.[29] The campaign was not very spirited. Both men held similar views on the more important questions. Reid was a popular governor and largely on this account he was returned to office. Gales took the defeat coolly and insisted that the result was not a test of party strength in North Carolina. It is very evident, he wrote in the *Register* of August 18, "that 'Free Suffrage' is stronger than either of the political parties . . . ." He remained confident that the Whigs "disencumbered . . . of all local and sectional issues" will carry the state in November for Scott and Graham.

In the presidential campaign Gales attacked Pierce as being opposed to slavery and an enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. His career as an officer in the Mexican War was soundly ridiculed. He was charged with being a favorite candidate of the British on account of his alleged support of free trade, and he was accused of being committed to American intervention in foreign affairs.[30] Gales warned the South not to "fall victims to the cry of Northern men with Southern feelings," and declared that Pierce's Free Soil companions would probably be drawn on for cabinet posts.[31] As for the Whig choice, Gales labored to show that Scott was fundamentally sound on slavery and the Compromise. His military record was extolled and in the weeks preceding the election the *Register* contained a two-column cut of Scott beneath which were printed lines praising the General's conduct in the service of his country.[32] Gales, stirred by the increasing appropriation of public lands to the Northwestern states for the purpose of building railroads, revived the issue of distribution. In the *Register* of September 15, he wrote that if the Atlantic states ever "expect to secure . . . just rights

[27] Raleigh *Register*, June 23, 1852.
[28] Raleigh *Register*, May 1, 1852.
[29] Raleigh *Standard*, May 19, 1852.
[30] Raleigh *Register*, July 24-October 9, 1852.
[31] Raleigh *Register*, October 6, 1852.
[32] *Ibid.*, September 1, October 20, 1852.

in this vast public domain" their only hope lies with the Whigs who "have always advocated an equitable division of the lands amongst the States."

Southern Whigs, however, were not convinced of Scott's "infallibility" on slavery and in November Pierce and King were elected. William A. Graham's name on the ticket had attracted considerable support for the Whigs in North Carolina, but it was not enough to insure victory. Gales reported the results in the *Register* of November 6, darkly commenting on the "success which has crowned the machinations of the branded factions of Abolitionists, Filibusters, &c. . . . ." He declared he had no intention "to enter upon a consideration of the causes which have led to the defeat of the Whig candidates," and asserted that the rush of office seekers, "of all the *isms*—of all the foreign vote in the Northern cities . . . would alone be sufficient to account for it." Dennis Heartt was nearer the truth when he wrote in his Hillsboro *Recorder* of November 10, that Scott was defeated because he was too antislavery to suit the South and too proslavery to suit the North.

The election of 1852 indicated that the people had accepted the finality of the Compromise of 1850. Hope for its future lay in strong leadership, but such nature had not bestowed upon Franklin Pierce. Instead of selecting for his cabinet men who had been active in the cause of the union, Pierce chose men representative of every diverse opinion. Gales recognized this when he commented in the *Register* of March 9, 1853, that the President had shown a "disposition to conciliate all sections and all factions. . . . and, accordingly, we find probably the most feeble Administration that the country has ever seen." But of greater concern to Gales was the appointment of Jefferson Davis to the cabinet, which indicated to him that the disunion wing of the Southern Democrats was in the ascendancy.

Defeated in the state and defeated in the nation, the Whig party and the *Register* began to decline. In North Carolina the Democrats embraced the progressive program which had kept the Whigs in control of state politics for fourteen years. Gales continued to support Whig policies, but leadership was gradually taken over by the Fayetteville *Observer*. Meanwhile, the place of prominence once held by the *Register* among the press of the state was usurped by Holden and his *Standard*.

In the state elections of 1854 the Whigs nominated Alfred Dockery and, with Reid no longer eligible, promise of success seemed good. But the Democrats adopted two chief issues of the Whig party, public education and internal improvements. However, their candidate, Thomas Bragg, had a conservative record on internal improvements and Gales attempted to make this the issue of the campaign.[33] His attacks, though, were more rancorous than reasoned. The Democrats triumphed again

[33] Raleigh *Register*, June 7, 1854.

and Gales finally realized that the Whigs were now hopelessly in the minority.[34]

The reopening of the slavery controversy by the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise met with Gales' opposition. The object of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he wrote in the *Register* of February 1, 1854, was "the manufacture of Southern popularity." Yet, he continued, it is not feasible that slavery will be extended into either of the territories organized. Citing a report made by John C. Fremont, Gales contended that the country was not suitable for slavery. Furthermore, the states near the proposed territories are free states and will "supply the pioneer class which always keeps in advance of matured civilization." Naturally, Gales concluded, the settlers will be prejudiced against slavery. Consequently, Gales saw no reason for disturbing the Missouri Compromise and he predicted that the Kansas-Nebraska bill "will be the rallying cry for another anti-slavery agitation which will throw all that have preceded it in the shade." Nonetheless, when it became apparent that the bill was popular in the South, Gales, although contending that the South had nothing to gain other than the recognition of an abstract right, agreed that the South should be united and see the measure through.[35]

One of the first results of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was a shifting of party lines. Many Southern Whigs abandoned the party, convinced that the Democrats were the true representatives of the South. Northern Whigs drifted aimlessly into one of two new parties; one, the Republican, an antislavery party, the other, the American, antiforeign. The American held some promise of being a national party.

Gales began to take notice of the American party in the early part of 1854. It was called the Know Nothing party from the habit of its members of answering all questions concerning the party with the words "I Know Nothing."[36] Organized along fraternal lines with oaths of secrecy, its strength lay in the Northern states and Louisiana, where a large influx of emigrants, mostly Catholic, had aroused resentment among the native Protestant stocks, especially the Whigs who noticed that an increasing number of emigrants voted the Democratic ticket. In the *Register* of January 13, 1854, Gales wrote, "We do not know any of its secrets, but we do not hesitate for a moment to declare that, so far as the intentions of the 'new party' have been revealed, they are just and right." On July 12, that same year, he published a letter setting forth the principal aims of the party and, "without intending to endorse all the views of the writer," agreed that the aim to check the growth of Roman Catholic influence in America was laudable.

[34] *Ibid.*, August 16, 1854.
[35] Raleigh *Register*, February 11, 1854.
[36] Darrell W. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South* (Baton Rouge, 1950), p. 44.

The American party gained a foothold in North Carolina early in 1855 and by election time in August it was able to poll a vote within a few thousand of that given the Whig candidate for governor the previous year. With a little more discipline, Gales thought that the Democratic hold on the nation and the state could be broken.[37] Earlier he had declared that the American party "is the only political organization we now have, which can act nationally against the existing Administration and the transfer of its power to its chosen successor."[38]

The Republican party, the other party to emerge from the chaos created by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, was greeted by Gales with open hostility as a party "which seems diabolically bent on dissolving the Union." Responsibility for its formation, he declared in the *Register* of February 13, 1856, "lies at the door of the present double dealing Administration, aided and 'harked-on' by the wily 'Little Giant' of Illinois," Stephen A. Douglas. Gales insisted "no truly national man can object to the *non-intervention* principle of the Kansas-Nebraska bill," but where was the need to continue legislating on the subject when it had been "previously established by the Compromise of 1850, and was acquiesced in by a large majority of the people North and South."

On February 22, 1856, the American party meeting in Philadelphia nominated former President Millard Fillmore and Andrew Jackson Donelson as candidates for President and Vice-President. Gales hailed the nominations "with feelings of exultation," and called on "the friends of the Country,—those who value the Union— . . . and who long for the perpetuity of our glorious institutions of government" to fight until success "shall have crowned their efforts."[39]

For governor the American party chose John A. Gilmer to oppose the re-election of Bragg. Gales acclaimed Gilmer as a friend to education and internal improvements, and predicted that he would redeem the state from "anti-American, locofoco misrule."[40] If it was misrule, the people liked it, for in August they returned Bragg to office by a large majority. The *Register* of August 13 and August 27 contained the explanation; the Democrats had conducted the campaign with "reckless and unscrupulous disregard of the rules" and refused to consider the "issue of principles."

The defeat completely crushed the American party in North Carolina. *Register* editorials continued to stress the antiforeign principles of the American party and emphasized Fillmore's soundness on slavery. Ultra Southerners talked of secession should John C. Fremont, the Republican candidate, be elected, but the *Register* contended that this was only a scheme to gain votes for their candidate.[41] The Democrats won a

[37] Raleigh *Register*, August 15, 22, 1855. [38] *Ibid.*, June 27, 1855.
[39] Raleigh *Register*, March 5, 1856. [40] *Ibid.*, April 16, July 2, 1856.
[41] *Ibid.*, April 16, May 14, July 2, August 6, 23, 1856; Raleigh *Standard*, September 24, October 25, 1856.

smashing victory in November, but the total vote cast was more than fifteen thousand less than that cast in the August elections. Returns in the *Register* of December 3 show that the American vote fell off 7,289, while that of the Democrats dropped 8,523. The *Register* again raised the cry of corruption and the Democrats were accused of agitating the question of secession merely to retain the spoils of office.[42]

Of greater significance to the *Register* than the collapse of the American party was the passage of the Gales name from its masthead. For several years many of the supporters of the *Register* had been dissatisfied with the course followed by Seaton Gales. In 1855, when Gales embraced the American party, several of the leading Whigs approached Edward J. Hale and urged him to move the Fayetteville *Observer* to Raleigh, but he declined.[43] Moreover, in addition to political difficulties, Gales had run into financial troubles. In 1852 and 1853 he had completely refitted his office and purchased a cylinder power press.[44] All of this expense had strained Gales' resources and his appeals to delinquent subscribers became more frequent. In the *Register* of January 16, 1856, Gales wrote that the arrearages due him amounted to $8,000.

In August, 1856, Gales assigned the *Register* and all debts to Daniel C. Fowle, and with the issue of November 12 his name was dropped from the owner's box. An announcement stated that the *Register* would be sold at public auction on December 5. In the *Standard* of December 10 Holden reported that the *Register* had been sold to John W. Syme for $5,100.

John W. Syme was the owner and editor of the Petersburg (Virginia) *Intelligencer*. According to Hale, "the name is pronounced *Sim*, and it should be spelled *Sim*, for where's the use of wasting a superfluous type in printing the name of so poor a creature."[45] Syme's removal from Petersburg was regretted by the people there, for he had been a popular and energetic editor. An opposition newspaper, the Petersburg *Democrat*, characterized him as one of the most "caustic and humorous paragraphist[s]" in the South.[46]

The new editor of the *Register* pledged his support to Whig policies and promised to continue the fight for Whig-American principles. On domestic matters he committed the *Register* to cooperation with the friends of North Carolina in promoting the prosperity of the state.[47]

[42] Raleigh *Register*, November 19, 1856.
[43] Fayetteville *Observer*, March 5, 1855.
[44] Raleigh *Register*, April 24, May 29, 1852; August 27, 1853; February 8, 1854.
[45] Fayetteville *Observer*, June 15, 1857.
[46] Quoted in the Salisbury *Watchman*, December 23, 1856. Two columns of the *Register* of December 31, 1856, are devoted to extracts from Virginia and North Carolina newspapers expressing regret at Syme's retirement from Petersburg and welcoming him to Raleigh.
[47] Raleigh *Register*, December 10, 1856.

Syme's arrival in Raleigh was delayed until the latter part of January to enable him to settle his business affairs in Petersburg.

Seaton Gales retired from newspaper work and became associated with the North Carolina Bank. With the outbreak of the Civil War he was appointed adjutant of the Fourth Regiment of North Carolina Volunteers, was quickly promoted to major, and served in northern Virginia. He was captured at the battle of Fisher's Hill, October 19, 1864, and imprisoned at Johnson's Island, a federal prison near Sandusky, Ohio. After the War he became associate editor of the Raleigh *Sentinel,* but he gave this up after a short time and accepted a position as secretary of the North Carolina Home Insurance Company of Raleigh where he remained until 1877. He died November 29, 1878, at the age of fifty.[48]

Syme was well received by the Raleigh editorial group. The *Register* began to improve in its appearance, which Gales had allowed to become slovenly. On November 11, 1857, Syme reduced the subscription price of the weekly *Register* to $2 if paid in advance, $3 otherwise. He claimed then that the "weekly Register is the largest paper, and contains more reading matter than any other published in the State," with a circulation "equal to that of any other political paper in the State."[49] In April, 1858, Syme followed the policy already adopted by Holden and Hale and established the cash system for subscriptions. After April 7, all subscriptions to the *Register* were collected in advance. The *Register* of July 11, 1860, was presented to its readers "printed on one of HOE'S PATENT SINGLE LARGE CYLINDER PRINTING MACHINES," a recent purchase of Syme's which was capable of turning out two thousand sheets per hour. This greatly improved the appearance of the paper and indicated, perhaps, that Syme had achieved a circulation large enough to warrant the purchase of such a press.

In the fall of 1860 Syme took Everard Hall into partnership. Hall devoted his talents to handling the business affairs of the *Register* and spent some time travelling over the state soliciting subscriptions and collecting accounts. But the next year Syme and Hall dissolved their partnership and the paper continued under the sole direction of Syme.[50]

However talented Syme was as a newspaper editor, within a year there were several people, editors and political leaders, both Democratic and Whig, who wished he had remained in Petersburg. He had been in Raleigh less than six months when he challenged Edward J. Hale and his son Peter to a duel. This grew out of a dispute between the editors of the Fayetteville *Observer* and a patent medicine firm over the ac-

[48] Raleigh *Register,* February 24, 1858; September 28, 1859; June 26, 1856; August 23, 1862; Raleigh *News,* November 30, 1878; Raleigh *Observer,* November 30, 1878.

[49] Holden in the *Standard* of June 28, 1854, claimed a circulation of three thousand.

[50] Raleigh *Register,* October 3, 1860; October 5, 1861.

ceptance of patent medicine advertisements, discontinued by the *Observer* some two years before. Syme was drawn into the affray when he published a letter from the firm denouncing the *Observer* for its stand on patent medicines. Immediately the Hales discontinued their exchange with the *Register,* and threatened its editor with a libel suit. Tempers became heated as each editor blistered the other in the columns of his respective paper, and the affair came to a climax when Syme challenged first the senior and then the junior editor of the *Observer* to a duel. Both men refused on the grounds that they held "the system of dueling in the utmost abhorrence."[51]

From this time on there was a growing dissatisfaction with Syme among the Whig leaders, who in 1859 tried to buy the *Register,* offering Syme $6,000 for it. He considered the offer, but ultimately declined. Whereupon, George Little, Jonathan Worth, and H. W. Husted, prominent leaders of the party, proposed to establish another Whig paper in Raleigh and began to solicit subscriptions; but for fear a rupture would occur between it and the *Register,* they decided against the plan. Acting on the advice of Worth they attempted to heal the breach with Syme, but extended their chief aid to the Fayetteville *Observer.*[52]

In spite of this disgruntled antagonism, Syme made the *Register* an energetic opposition paper. He took issue in 1857 with the Richmond *Whig's* contention that the American party should be disbanded and argued that the principles for its existence remained. He suggested that the old line Whigs should unite with the American party, since their policies, except for distribution, were "a custom that is outmoded."[53] But it soon became evident that the American party was defunct. In 1858 the name was discarded in favor of "Opposition," and the next year all opponents to the Democrats had returned to the name Whig.[54]

In the election of 1858 the Whigs did not nominate a candidate for governor, but supported Duncan K. McRae, an independent Democrat. Syme came out for McRae in the *Register* of February 3, 1858, and argued that there would be more to gain by supporting a Democrat like McRae who favored distribution than by upholding the old Whig principles of a tariff and a bank which were lost issues. John W. Ellis was chosen by the Democrats after a heated convention fight in which Holden sought the nomination. Syme felt that his "brother-editor" had been wronged and on several occasions he commented that "Holden serves as the ladder up which Democratic aspirants climb, and which, when the object is reached, is unceremoniously kicked down."[55] Ellis won the

[51] Raleigh *Register,* May 13, 20, June 17, July 15, 1857.
[52] *Ibid.,* October 19, 1859; Jonathan Worth to George W. Little, August 11, 1859; November 4, 1859; November 26, 1859, in J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth* (Raleigh, 1909), I, 70-71, 81, 83-84.
[53] Raleigh *Register,* June 17, 1857.
[54] Raleigh *Register,* February 16, 1859.
[55] *Ibid.,* April 17, 21, August 18, 1858.

election and the Democrats elected about two-thirds of the state legislature. Syme attributed the defeat of McRae to a general apathy among the Whigs, Americans, and Distributionists, brought on by the belief that there was no chance for their man.[56]

On the national scene Syme continued the conservative stand given the *Register* by the Galeses. He ignored the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court which upheld the constitutional position of the South in regard to slavery extension, but this was probably due to the fact that at the time Syme was engaged in moving to Raleigh from Petersburg. He favored the Lecompton constitution of Kansas and complimented Buchanan's message given on its presentation to Congress.[57] In the Lincoln-Douglas debates held in the late summer of 1858, Syme took the side of Douglas, and wrote in the *Register* of September 1, that "Poor Lincoln . . . gets dreadfully mauled whenever they meet."

In October, 1859, America's leading fanatic, John Brown, declared private war on the institution of slavery and invaded the South at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Syme, in the *Register* of October 26, insisted that it was the work "of a wretched lunatic and fanatic, and a handful of desperadoes who having nothing to live for, had ceased to value life." With the next issue, however, Syme advanced the idea that the raid had been planned "in which many more than Brown and his banditti were engaged." He noticed that the press of the North with the exception of "Greeley's *Tribune,* Beecher's *Independent* and Bryant's *Evening Post"* generally disapproved of the outrage. Syme implored the people not to look upon this raid as a sectional matter, but as one concerning the nation. The *Register* continued to feature the Harpers Ferry raid through the month of November, and Syme implicated Senators William H. Seward, Charles Sumner, and Nathaniel P. Hale and Governor Salmon P. Chase of Ohio. As for Brown, he dismissed the appeal of Henry Raymond of the New York *Times* that the leader of the raid not be executed and made a martyr since it was apparent that he was insane. Syme insisted in the *Register* of November 9 that Brown was not insane and that he should be executed for his deeds. When he was, Syme came to the defense of Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia who was ridiculed for assembling a large military force at the execution. "Had he not assembled that force," Syme argued, "an attempt to rescue Brown would have been made, blood would have been spilled, and in the end the Union would have burst asunder." He concluded by warning the sympathizers of Brown in the North "that the South has the power to protect her soil and property, and will exercise it in spite of all the menaces which can be levelled at her by the abolitionists and their aiders and abettors."[58]

[56] *Ibid.,* August 18, 1858.
[57] Raleigh *Register,* February 10, 1858.
[58] Raleigh *Register,* December 7, 1859.

The Whigs of North Carolina held their last state convention in February, 1860. It was known that the Constitutional Union party, a new organization made up of old line Whigs and Americans, would nominate a candidate for the presidency. Syme, in the *Register* of March 7, reported that the convention had approved of this new party and that delegates had been appointed to the national convention to be held at Baltimore on May 9, with the recommendation that William A. Graham be nominated for the presidency. The convention nominated John Pool for governor and adopted a platform endorsing distribution, condemning the Republicans, and demanding a strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.

The Constitutional Union party met and nominated John Bell of Tennessee for President and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for Vice-President. It appealed to the voters with a vague platform, "the Constitution of the Country, the Union of the States and the Enforcement of the Laws." Syme received the nominations favorably and gave considerable space in the *Register* for the months of June and July to emphasizing the character of the men and their devotion to the union.

The Democrats met at Charleston in April. Unable to agree either on a platform or a candidate, the convention, after the Southern extremists seceded, adjourned to meet again in Baltimore. There "after a week of fighting, cursing, swearing and all manner of black-guardism, the Great National Democrat Convention . . . bursted all to pieces."[59] Two candidates were chosen; the remnant of the party nominated Stephen A. Douglas and the Southern Seceders selected John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky. The Democratic party was doomed, just as Syme had predicted in the *Register* of August 17, 1859. The only hope for the country was for all "Constitutional-union-loving men to bury minor differences of opinion and go as one man for the nominees of the Constitutional Union Convention."[60]

The election for governor was conducted largely on the national issues of slavery. To oppose Pool, the Democrats nominated Governor Ellis for re-election. The results in August returned Ellis to office, but with a majority less than he had polled in 1858. Syme viewed the results with satisfaction and declared that "we have given the Democracy a blow from which it cannot recover." He was convinced that the Union party would triumph in November.[61]

When, by September, it appeared that the Republicans had an excellent chance at success, Southern radicals again raised the question of secession. Syme doubled his efforts to arouse union sentiment. He charged William L. Yancey, leader of the Southern extremists, with running Brickenridge solely for the purpose of dividing the vote and insuring success for Lincoln in the hope that the South would be pro-

[59] Raleigh *Register*, June 27, 1860. [60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*, August 8, 1860.

voked into seceding.[62] But in the event that Lincoln did win, Syme was firm in declaring that it would not be a sufficient cause for disunion, a position concurred in by William Holden, now a conservative on Southern rights.[63]

Breckenridge carried North Carolina but Lincoln won the presidency. Syme was away when the news arrived; his partner Everard Hall declared the policy of the *Register* was "to give his administration a *fair* trial."[64] In the next issue, November 17, Syme wrote that the election "has been accomplished in the mode prescribed by the Constitution, and therefore there is no ground for further resistance to [Lincoln's] inauguration, or for a rupture of the Union of these States." He was severe in his indictment of South Carolina's move to withdraw from the union, and charged that the only danger to slavery was that *"South Carolina's movements are well calculated . . . to impair the value of Slaves in the States of North Carolina and Virginia."* South Carolina's action, Syme continued, was a plot, because she withdraws her representation in Congress "in the hope that something may be done by the Congress of 1861-62 which will force States, now unwilling to dissolve the Union, to go out of it, and join her in a Southern Confederacy." Syme hoped that the game would be blocked. He opposed the calling of a convention by North Carolina, recommended by Governor Ellis, and contended in the *Register* of December 15 that he was against any convention except one that would be held for the purpose of "making a new Confederacy, from which the New England States would be excluded."

On December 20, a convention in South Carolina voted to secede from the union. Syme printed the ordinance of secession adopted by the South Carolina convention in the *Register* of December 26, and speculated on the problems that would arise—the mails, for one, which he predicted would lead to embarrassments in the mercantile firms located in the seceding state. No other state, he hoped, will "imitate the egregious folly of South Carolina," and he admonished all states to "let her stand alone to enjoy all the rich rewards due to her arrogant and obstinate course."

Although Syme did not approve of South Carolina's action, he was opposed to any attempt to force her back into the union. All discussion concerning enforcement of federal laws and the right of coercion he regarded as a "controversy about a pure abstraction." He quoted James Madison as stating "that there is no right to coerce a State and hold her as a subdued portion of the Union." Such an attempt, Syme insisted, will "bring on civil war and revolution."[65]

[62] Raleigh *Register,* August 22, 1860.
[63] Raleigh *Standard,* September 19, 1860.
[64] Raleigh *Register,* November 14, 1860.
[65] Raleigh *Register,* January 19, 1861.

Syme greeted with forlorn hopes, the attempts made by Senator John J. Crittenden and others to reconcile the differences existing between the seceding states and the union. He inclined toward a plan for a Central Confederacy made up of the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, and believed that such a confederacy "would constitute a nucleus around which another" union might be constructed, provided New England would not be permitted to join it.[66]

On April 12, Confederate troops began the attack on Fort Sumter, and three days later President Lincoln issued a call for troops. Syme did not hesitate; he called upon Governor Ellis to recall the legislature in order that a convention bill be passed. We are of the opinion, he declared, "that North Carolina, and all the slaveholding States, should be united in one Confederacy."[67] On May 22, Syme reported that North Carolina had severed its connections with the government of the United States. He wrote:

> It is our lot to be the editors of the oldest paper in the State, and one which was devoted to the maintenance of what was once the Union of the States, as long as it could with honor be preserved. That time has passed. The Union has been destroyed by the folly and wickedness of a Northern and intensely sectional Administration. This Administration has issued its decree . . . that the South shall be subjugated, and that to attain this end, all laws of civilized warfare shall be violated . . . .

Syme reported the progress of the war faithfully. Each victory won by the Confederate forces was acclaimed, the conduct of North Carolina troops praised.[68] Much of the news came from travelers passing through Raleigh and from letters received from the front by Raleigh people. He relied on other newspapers and generally used his judgment in determining which contained the best account. But often enough his sources were vague and Syme confessed that they "leave matters most strangely in a fog."[69]

The increasing high prices and shortage of commodities brought Syme around to a vehement attack on speculators and extortioners. He asked citizens to refuse to buy until prices became more reasonable, and he called on the legislature to enact measures to control prices and prevent monopolies.[70] He was alert to publicize suitable substitutes for scarce commodities and he urged planters to forego their usual crops and plant food stuffs.[71]

On the political front Syme was a ready defender of the Confederacy. His antagonist, as before the war, was Holden, who was now a unionist

[66] Raleigh *Register,* January 5, February 9, 16, 1861.
[67] *Ibid.,* April 17, 24, 1861.
[68] Raleigh *Register,* June 15, 1861; February 12, 1862.
[69] *Ibid.,* July 24, 1861.
[70] *Ibid.,* November 13, 20, 1861; November 19, 1862.
[71] *Ibid.,* April 2, September 20, 1862.

and leader of a peace movement. In the election for governor in 1862 Syme supported William Johnston and violently attacked Zeb Vance, who was backed by Holden and the Conservative party. Vance won, but Syme insisted it was due to his great popularity in the army and not to any principles that looked to a reunion with the North.[72] As would be expected, Syme was violently hostile to Lincoln and the policies of the North. The Emancipation Proclamation he labelled a "bid for servile insurrection" and a clear confession "of the inability of the *Whites* of the North to crush out a 'rebellion' which they vauntingly promised to put down in sixty or ninety days."[73] Syme predicted that it would drive the conservative men in the border states into the Confederacy and create indignation in the minds of the federal troops, who enlisted in a war for the defense of the union and not for the emancipation of Negroes.[74]

Increasing high prices and shortages made newspaper publishing an exacting task. The price of paper rose from 10c a pound before the war to 30c in 1863. Ink was from 75c to $2 a pound where it had formerly been 25c to 50c. Wages for a journeyman printer were $10 a week in 1860, but by 1863 they were $15.[75] All of this made for the strictest economy. With the issue of October 31, 1861, Syme reduced the page size of the *Register* by more than two inches all around and on June 11, 1862, he curtailed the semiweekly *Register* to a half-sheet. On February 11, 1863, he announced an increase in the subscription price, the weekly from $2 to $3 a year and the semiweekly from $4 to $5. In the issue of September 9, 1863, Syme announced that the *Register* would be discontinued at Raleigh and thereafter would be published at Petersburg, Virginia. In his former home, Syme had found an opening for a newspaper. Ordinarily he would have sold the Raleigh *Register,* but to do this it would have been necessary to include all printing materials. The chances of obtaining a press in the Confederacy in 1863 were virtually impossible and to purchase type and other materials was prohibitive. Consequently, the only way Syme could publish was to retain his press and type. Syme promised to resume publication as soon as his materials could be transported to Petersburg, and subscribers to the Raleigh *Register* were invited to continue their patronage. "Although the paper will be published in another State, [Syme declared] it will always be found the unfaltering advocate of the interests, rights and honour of the Old North State."

Sixty-four years of unbroken publication had ended for the Raleigh *Register.* Founded in devotion to the principles of Thomas Jefferson, it cast off its state rights character in the era of good feelings and assumed a national conservative position. When the disintegrating fragments of the old parties were reorganizing during the administration of

[72] *Ibid.,* June 4, 25, August 13, 1862.
[73] Raleigh *Register,* October 1, 1862.
[74] *Ibid.,* October 8, 15, 1862.
[75] Raleigh *Standard,* February 4, 1863.

President Andrew Jackson, the *Register* supported Henry Clay and the Whigs, endorsing their policies of nationalism and the American System. Torn between loyalty for the South and belief in the union, the *Register* in 1860 followed a middle course until forced to choose and then, on grounds that coercion of a state was not a function of the federal government, it followed North Carolina out of the union in 1861. In its last years the *Register* fought against the union with a vigor equal to its defense of the union in the crisis of 1850. Thus passed from Raleigh an institution, its musty pages a chronicle of human affairs for the information of after-ages.

CHAPTER VII

THE REGISTER IN RALEIGH

Local News and Advertising

Though politics was of paramount importance to the editors of the *Register* throughout its existence, some effort was made "to render the [paper] an interesting vehicle of correct information of all public and domestic events."[1] In the main, however, public and domestic events embraced foreign and national news. Local or home news received meager treatment. In Raleigh, with a population in 1807 of eighty-five families and with never more than five thousand inhabitants during the span of the *Register's* life, local news was generally known in advance of the weekly or semiweekly arrival of the paper. Furthermore, at no time did the *Register* have a staff large enough to cover the local scene, while the restrictions on space imposed by a four-page format compelled the editor to publish material that would certainly be fresh to most of his readers. Moreover, foreign news, at least until the War of 1812, was given preferential consideration; after that date it declined in relative importance and was supplanted by national news. The advent of the penny press in the 1830's pointed up local news, emphasizing its sensational aspects and tragicomic character, but this had little effect on the *Register* and the local field remained untilled. Finally, with a sense of propriety that respected only news that was "Friendly to thought, to virtue and to peace,"[2] much in the passing scene fell outside the *Register's* constraints. This substantially precluded a good deal of the crime and scandal occurring in Raleigh, certainly that part concerning the well born.

Advertising, except for such items as nostrums which were national in circulation, may be regarded as local news inasmuch as it provided intelligence concerning much of the social and economic activity in Raleigh and North Carolina. This type of matter enjoyed the complete encouragement of the editors of the *Register* and, unlike local news, suffered few restrictions either of space or text. A typical issue would have nearly half its columns devoted to advertising. Disagreeable to the editor as some of the advertisements might be, "when signed, and paid for as advertisements, he cannot consistently with his duty, refuse to give them space," declared Joseph Gales in the *Register* of July 16,

[1] Raleigh *Register,* December 7, 1821.
[2] *Ibid.,* February 14, 1840.

1804. However, abusive advertisements were generally frowned upon, and at a meeting of the state editors in 1837 a code was adopted which restrained this form of advertising.[3] This applied, however, to private controversies only and in nowise protected the consumer from fraudulent or spurious advertisers. It could hardly be expected that editors would investigate the sincerity or quality of advertising received for publication, but they were alert to persons who cheated them of payments, and facts and identities were published for the benefit of other editors receiving the *Register* in exchange.[4] The type of advertising most desired was that pertaining to sale or purchase, and this bulked large in the columns of the paper. Merchants were advised that the *Register* circulated extensively in North Carolina and was distributed generally throughout the Southern states with a few subscribers scattered over the Middle and Eastern states, and that it would be to their profit to advertise their wares by this medium. They were also reminded that the cost of such service was considerably below that obtaining in England.[5] Yet, despite such solicitation, advertisements took second place to politics and none were so important that the proceedings of a Whig meeting or speeches in Congress could not crowd them out.[6]

Much of the home news and all of the advertisements were voluntarily brought to the *Register* office. With the exception of a big story—a political rally, a serious fire, or a severe storm—no member of the *Register* staff went out in search of news or to solicit advertisements. A chief source for state news was letters, and the masthead of the *Register* contained a standing invitation for communications, the only stipulation being that they "must be postpaid."[7] Many of the letters were highly opinionated and the editors were frequently forced to moderate their tone or to decline publication,[8] but a valuable coverage of local events and conditions in the state was provided by these letters: discussions of geological surveys, agricultural development, the visit of prominent personages, and the progress of internal improvements.[9] Marriage and death notices—a regular feature in the *Register* from its beginning—were obtained from correspondents; the only requirement was that they be signed.[10] Valuable as these communications were as a source of news, there were occasions when the editor was vicitimized by a writer with puckish tendencies. This was the case in the graphic account of a volcanic eruption near Asheville, North Carolina, which appeared in the *Register* of February 7, 1812. Though Joseph Gales doubted the truth of the story he printed it anyway, and not until the

[3] Raleigh *Register*, November 6, 1837. [4] *Ibid.*, January 8, 1841.
[5] Raleigh *Register*, October 12, 1809; September 17, 1833; September 30, 1834.
[6] *Ibid.*, April 6, 1850. [7] *Ibid.*, February 17, 1824.
[8] *Ibid.*, February 11, 1813; October 21, 1834.
[9] Raleigh *Register*, March 21, 1823; December 22, 1835; April 30, 1847; July 19, 1848.
[10] Ibid., November 22, 1811.

issue of February 28, was he able to discredit it. Letters of this sort, plus the temper and scurrility of others, led the editors to disclaim any responsibility for the "sentiments of their correspondents."[11]

The most common item of local news was fire. No town or community was exempt from this calamity. The most serious fires, such as those in Raleigh in 1816 and 1832, the burning of the state capitol in 1831 following the destruction of Fayetteville that same year, the leveling of Petersburg, Virginia, in 1836, Washington, North Carolina, in 1837, and Wilmington in 1840,[12] were given prominent display. The distinctive feature of these calamities was the completeness with which the fires destroyed; each of them laid waste virtually the whole town. The stories were written with much detail, rich in description and metaphor. "Oft did the threatening volume bend its insatiate flame westwardly, as if looking with wanton rapacity for further prey," wrote Joseph Gales in the *Register* of June 14, 1816, describing the progress of the fire which destroyed fifty-one buildings in Raleigh. Usually the stories were followed by appeals for aid for the sufferers and, in the case of Raleigh, by editorials demanding adequate fire protection including water, pumps, and an engine. In 1851, for example, a small fire started in a store on Fayetteville Street and, if Seaton Gales may be believed, it might "have been promptly suppressed" had Raleigh possessed "the most ordinary water facilities." But "in a very few moments, the destroying element extended itself" with the result that several blocks in the heart of the business section were laid waste.[13] Gales followed the story with an appeal to the mayor and commissioners to take prompt action to provide Raleigh with "good Engines, and efficient Fire Police, and, above all, *water.*" As a result an ordinance was passed "prohibiting the future erection of any wooden buildings on the recently burned square," and plans were laid to provide water and to purchase a new fire engine; then authorization was given for the organization of volunteer fire companies.[14] There were numerous stories of small fires, such as the burning of the Oxford Academy in 1816 and the destruction of the Raleigh Methodist Church in December, 1839,[15] but these attracted little attention by comparison with the major catastrophes listed above and warranted hardly more than a brief mention.

Storms and epidemics were other common calamities that were reported in the *Register.* Seaton Gales wrote in the *Register* of May 7, 1851, that "a storm of most extraordinary and alarming violence passed over a portion" of Raleigh "spreading ruin and devastation before it." He listed the damage sustained, but added that no deaths had been re-

[11] *Ibid.,* October 10, 18, 1823; July 10, 1837.
[12] *Ibid.,* June 14, 1816; June 2, 9, 23, 1831; September 28, 1832; February 16, 1836; March 28, 1837; January 24, 1840.
[13] Raleigh *Register,* December 17, 1851.
[14] *Ibid.,* December 20, 1851; February 11, 18, March 5, 1852.
[15] Raleigh *Register,* April 26, 1816; December 21, 1839.

ported. A snow storm that struck in 1857 was not as violent, but its severity was felt longer. A number of people were frozen to death and fuel in Raleigh became dangerously scarce. Trains were stopped and John Syme who had gone to Petersburg to bring his family to Raleigh—he had just bought the *Register*—was detained several weeks.[16] Epidemics, however, were of greater concern to the editors. Yellow fever, cholera, and small pox were of most frequency, but of these only small pox was of consequence in Raleigh. Yellow fever was restricted to the port towns; Wilmington and Washington, of North Carolina towns, suffered an annual visitation. The *Register* usually gave a faithful report of the progress of the disease, chronicling the deaths, and announcing the restoration of health.[17] The cholera epidemics in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1836 and in the Southwest in 1849 were reported in the *Register* for those years, with Weston Gales advising the people of Raleigh to clean and lime the streets, alleys, and yards of the city to prevent a local outbreak of the disease.[18] Small pox was more serious. This "loathsome disease" broke out in Raleigh on several occasions, in 1824 and 1836 reaching epidemic proportions. The *Register,* besides publicizing the progress of the disease, was active in advocating vaccination. It argued that vaccination was superior to innoculation, as it "repels" small pox.[19] Yet, in view of the prevalence of disease, crude sanitation practices, and primitive medicine, the people of Raleigh were remarkably healthy. In the *Register* of January 31, 1840, Weston Gales boasted of Raleigh's healthiness, stating that the number of deaths for 1839 from all causes amounted to only forty-four out of a population of nearly three thousand.

The press of North Carolina was a big item of news to the editors of the *Register*. Every new paper established, improvements of old ones, and changes in ownership or editorial personnel were worthy of notice by the *Register*. Furthermore, the state of the press—its growth and relative position in the state and nation—received attention in the news columns of the *Register*. Some of the publishers of these new papers had been trained in the office of the *Register* and for this reason their enterprise merited special attention from the editors. Edward Hale of the Fayetteville *Observer* and Charles Raboteau of the *North Carolina Times* at Louisburg were two former *Register* apprentices who became successful newspaper publishers. The lack of support given North Carolina papers was often lamented; Weston Gales wrote in the *Register* of June 3, 1834, that "seven newspaper deaths" had occurred during the past twelve months, and all for the same cause, "want of patronage." Claims made by the Wilmington *Journal* that it was the first daily in

[16] *Ibid.*, January 21-February 4, 1857.
[17] *Ibid.*, October 26, 1821.
[18] Raleigh *Register,* September 20-October 11, 1836; May 23, 1849.
[19] *Ibid.*, April 30, 1824; August 16, 30, September 17, 1836.

North Carolina prompted a vigorous denial by Seaton Gales, who defended the right to that honor for the *Register*. He contended that the *Daily Register,* though published only during the 1850-1851 session of the state legislature, was not "a mere bulletin of Legislative proceedings, but in name and in fact" a daily newspaper; that "it was regular in all its parts, and had as good claims to the character of permanency as the 'Journal' can demand."[20] Other than this instance and outside of political differences, relations between the *Register* and the press of the state were for the most part friendly. Newspaper enterprise, regardless of party spirit, was respected in the *Register*.

Crime, judging by the amount of news concerning it which appeared in the *Register,* was not prevalent in Raleigh, but with the proprieties governing news of this sort, such an index could hardly be called reliable. Weston Gales, in the *Register* of September 12, 1843, declared that "were we to give place to all the murders, and attempts to commit murder . . . we should have little room for anything else," and he doubted not that a newspaper "indicating its design to be to give accounts of all the murders, suicides, duels, assaults and batteries, that happen . . . would get a handsome patronage." Raleigh, then, had its share of crime and some of it was reported in the *Register*. Patrick Conway, a Raleigh merchant, was murdered in 1809 when he surprised burglars in the act of robbing his store. A man named Owen was arrested and charged with the crime, but Joseph Gales declined to publish more than the obvious details. "He will be tried by the laws of his country," Gales wrote in the *Register* of April 27, 1809, "and we wish not to furnish grounds for pre-judging him in the public mind." In 1822 a fight between Richard Hainds, the owner of a billiard room in Raleigh, and James Boylan ended in the death of Boylan. Joseph Gales' report in the *Register* of September 13, 1822, concluded with this statement: "This transaction has naturally produced a deep sensation here; but as it is to undergo a judicial investigation, we content ourselves with stating the facts as they have occurred." This policy, established by Joseph Gales, was followed by his successors and in crime stories generally an attempt was made to present only the barest facts essential to the event.

There were, of course, crimes other than murder committed, and burglary was perhaps the most common. Joseph Gales had his smoke house rifled in 1806,[21] and the stores in Raleigh were frequently broken into. Gales early began to agitate for a night watch or patrol, but except for a voluntary organization it was not until 1835 that the commissioners hired two men to patrol the town.[22] This hired watch was successful to a degree; several fires were discovered in time to prevent a serious outbreak; yet on one occasion they were made the object of

[20] Raleigh *Register,* October 29, 1853.
[21] Raleigh *Register,* January 13, 1806.
[22] Raleigh *Register,* May 4, 1802; June 2, 1835.

ridicule by an alert burglar. Walking their beat one night in December, 1843, the watch came upon a ladder leading up to the second story of a building on Fayetteville Street. A light was sent for, but while they waited the intruder escaped from a window and ran off into the darkness. The light arrived along with several citizens and everyone went inside to investigate. Taking advantage of the diversion the burglar returned and made off with his ladder.[23] Whether this incident is an indication of the aptitude of the watch is not certain, but some time after this the commissioners returned to the old system of a voluntary watch. However, in 1853 Seaton Gales reported that the commissioners had again substituted the hired guard in place of the voluntary guard, but a year later he complained that the guards were so few in number "that the whole system looks and operates but little better than a farce."[24]

This editorial endorsement of a watch for Raleigh was but one in a number of crusades conducted by the *Register* for city improvement. The agitation for street lights extended over thirty years. In the *Register* of September 13, 1830, it was reported that lamps had been provided for Fayetteville Street, and Weston and Joseph Gales expressed the hope that this service would be extended to all the town. Not only did this hope go unfilled, but before long the lights on Fayetteville Street were discontinued. In 1835 measures were again taken to aid "the nocturnal traveller, in his perambulations through the town" with results far from satisfactory.[25] Twenty years later, with Seaton Gales as editor, the *Register* endorsed a movement to provide the lighting of the city by gas, and several editorials were published designed to arouse interest.[26] But not until 1858, after John Syme had become owner of the *Register* was the agitation successful, and in the *Register* of May 26, 1858, following several months of constant carping on the inadequacy of the lighting system in Raleigh, Syme announced that work had begun on a gas system. In October, four months later, "many of the stores and private residences on Fayetteville Street blazed with as beautiful gas lights as" Editor Syme had ever seen.[27]

The editors of the *Register* also conducted campaigns to ban hogs from running at large on the city streets, but in this objective they were never completely successful. On two occasions ordinances were passed for this purpose.[28] Yet in 1860 visitors to Raleigh remarked of the number of hogs running on the city streets to the annoyance of pedestrians. The editors, too, called attention to the dirty streets in Raleigh and the commissioners were asked to look into the matter. At the same time, citizens were urged to plant shade trees and to clean up the premises

[23] *Ibid.*, December 5, 1843.
[24] *Ibid.*, February 12, 1853; January 14, 1854.
[25] Raleigh *Register*, November 17, 1835.
[26] *Ibid.*, April 21, May 16, 1855; June 18, 1856.
[27] *Ibid.*, October 20, 1858.
[28] *Ibid.*, January 31, 1845; August 11, 1855.

about their stores and homes, with the result that Seaton Gales, in the *Register* of January 8, 1853, described Raleigh as "the prettiest little city of the South." In the fall of 1855 Gales began a column of local news which contained brief items about activities in Raleigh, the need for civic improvements, gossip concerning his advertisers, and general news. Here was pointed up the need for sidewalks, town pumps, and proper care of the cemetery. By this means the city fathers were kept apprised of the city's needs.

Of popular interest to the people of Raleigh was the regular appearance in the city of lecturers, actors, singers, various performers, and the circus. These received due attention in the *Register,* where the editor wrote a brief note of praise or copied from the exchange favorable notices of previous performances. In 1837 one Perdicaris, "an accomplished GREEK, and an eloquent advocate of the cause of *Modern Greece,*" lectured in the Raleigh Presbyterian Church. Weston Gales wrote in the *Register* of April 4 that Perdicaris' "stirring and captivating descriptions of the fortunes, and scenes, and people of Greece" elicited enthusiastic applause. Of more general interest, however, was the series of lectures given by William Gilmore Simms in 1857. Reviewing the second lecture, "Ante-Colonial Discoveries of America," John Syme, in the *Register* of March 4, declared that the South owed Simms a great debt for his efforts to deliver the South "from a mental bondage" to the North. Northern books, textbooks especially, he continued, have done a lot toward spreading the spirit of abolitionism. Simms' work has served as an antidote to this creeping poison. In short, Syme concluded, this great Southerner "has made a more vigorous stand for Southern Rights, than all the fire-eating blusterers that have stumped the stump and sawed the air."

The theater was given enthusiastic support in Raleigh and during the annual meeting of the legislature a regular season was afforded playgoers. In 1815 the New Theater advertised its opening with a performance of the *Castle Spectre,* a five-act play, which was followed in the same evening by a two-act farce, *Love Laughs At Locksmiths.*[29] In this instance the actors were members of the local Thespian Society. The *Register* had been a devotee of this society since its organization in 1807 when it entertained the public to provide funds for the local academy.[30] The paper continued its support of the New Theater, published notices of the plays given, and commented favorably on the productions. But in later years the theater was allowed to run down. In 1835 Weston Gales reported in the *Register* of November 10 that a new manager had taken over, created a new decor, and engaged a stock company from the North. The season promised to be rewarding. Three years later the old Thespian Society was re-organized and made its

[29] Raleigh *Register,* April 21, 1815. [30] *Ibid.,* March 30, 1807.

debut with the Goldsmith comedy *She Stoops to Conquer,* but the performance was considerably below par, even for Gales, who was an avid supporter. The next performance was better and in the advance notice Gales promised that "a considerable accession of dramatic talent to the Company [will render] the performance attractive."[31]

In addition to the theater and the Thespian Society, a number of acting and musical companies played in Raleigh. Weston Gales was almost ecstatic in his praise of an eleven-year old prodigy actor who entertained Raleigh theater-goers in January, 1839, and the Hughes family, a group of singers who delighted Raleigh citizens with a week's performance in 1847, elicited favorable notice in the *Register* of April 2. In 1818 Charles Incledon, a celebrated English tenor, stopped for a one night concert in Raleigh. Joseph Gales reported in the *Register* of March 20 that the singer both delighted and astonished his audience by his display of vocal power. With the song *"Scots Wha Nae' We' Wallace bled"* Gales wrote that Incledon's "voice was calculated to kindle the pure flame of patriotism and valor in the coldest breast; and in *'Black Eyed Susan'* he proved himself equally capable of commanding the gentler feelings of the heart." A musical soiree presented by the St. Luke Family provided several evenings' entertainment for Raleigh music lovers in September, 1840. St. Luke, the director, also offered to tune pianos during his stay.[32]

Raleigh people were entertained by other performers. In 1819 a wax museum was opened with figures of George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and the Pope, among others, on display. Two excellent organs furnished music and there were a number of "optic views" for those who might grow weary of staring at the lifeless figures.[33] The appearance in the state of the original Siamese Twins, who later settled in North Carolina, was followed by the *Register* with avid interest. Their visit to Raleigh prompted the observation in the *Register* of October 14, 1834, that the Twins were "very genteel in their appearance, polished in their manners, and possess remarkably acute intellectual powers." The weaker sex were advised "that there is nothing indelicate in the exhibition . . . which can offend the feelings of the most fastidious female."

The *Register* welcomed the annual visit of the circus with special interest, since it meant a well placed advertisement complete with an attractive cut. Usually the circus stayed for several days and the editor, along with the rest of the community, thrilled at the exotic animals and daring acts presented under the big top. Joseph E. M. Hobby, Sands and Company, Stone and McCullum's Great Western Circus, and

[31] Raleigh *Register,* March 12, 1838.
[32] *Ibid.,* September 4, 1840.
[33] *Ibid.,* November 19, 1819.

Robinson and Eldred's New York Circus were the most popular shows to appear.

The state fair which opened in Raleigh in October, 1853, was enthusiastically supported by Seaton Gales. For weeks prior to its opening date the *Register* contained publicity of the event. Letters, stories, and editorials were published promoting the fair; premium awards and a list of exhibits to be displayed were printed. After the fair was over, Gales concluded that the fair "raised North Carolina a hunderd per cent. in her own eyes and the eyes of her sisters."[34] The next year it was the same story, and in subsequent years the *Register* supported the fair with generous coverage.

The editors of the *Register* were alert in noticing improvements in and about Raleigh. In the *Register* of March 30, 1802, Joseph Gales reported that the federal government proposed to establish a direct line of mail stages from Maine to Georgia which would pass through Raleigh. He recognized the benefits that would accrue to Raleigh from this mail route, but suggested that "if a little more attention were paid to the roads and bridges on the main line, it would tend greatly to the advantage and credit of the state." The stages began running the next year.[35] However, the *Register* of March 7, 1826, contained an editorial asking that something be done by the legislature to improve the general poor condition of the roads in the state. With the development of railroads, attention was withdrawn from this link in the transportation system.

The editors of the *Register* were wont to notice construction in Raleigh, including new buildings, the development of industry, and the enterprise of merchants, in terms of praise. Gales noted in the summer of 1828 that it was doubtless of great comfort to the people of Raleigh that Henry Hardie opened a public bathing establishment, and in 1839 a long felt *"desideratum"* was met when Lawrence and Christophers commenced a bake shop in the city.[36] But of special pleasure to Weston Gales was the beginning of a daily milk route in Raleigh. William H. Mead, a farmer living ten miles from Raleigh, began daily deliveries of milk in the fall of 1838, and in the *Register* of November 5 Gales gave unstinted praise of the service. He told residents that Mead fed his "Cows on the Cake made of Cotton seed, . . . the most nutritive food . . . that can be given to Cattle." Most important though, the milk was fresh, rich, and of good quality; moveover, it was delivered in time for breakfast and sold for six and a quarter cents a quart, three cents less than it usually sold for at the market. The same zeal was shown in reporting the establishment of a cotton mill in Orange County, a cotton seed oil mill near Raleigh, and a wholesale grocery and an iron foundry

[34] Raleigh *Register*, October 26, 1853.
[35] Raleigh *Register*, February 28, 1803.
[36] *Ibid.*, June 20, 1828; October 26, 1839.

in Raleigh.[37] The same was true with new construction. In the *Register* of August 6, 1833, Weston Gales wrote, with unconcealed pride, that there were "twenty new brick buildings going up on Fayetteville Street, intended for stores," while about the new capitol a hundred and twenty workmen were employed in various occupations. The year 1833 was a bustling one in Raleigh.

If the editors of the *Register* showed a readiness to publicize the enterprise of local merchants and other business men, these men responded with advertising. P. Casso, who wished to sell or rent his hotel, and Joseph Gales, with books, drugs, and assorted articles for sale at his book store, were the only Raleigh firms advertising in the first issue of the *Register,* October 22, 1799. Casso withdrew his advertisement after three issues, and for a number of years Gales was the only merchant consistently listing a stock of wares for sale. But sporadic advertising of specific products quickly became general. Advertisements of stud horses, runaways, lost and found articles, real estate, and legal notices comprised the bulk of such advertising. By 1807 the *Register* ran an average of seven columns of advertisements. The issue of September 3, that year, had advertisements of a new store in Raleigh, three sheriff sales, six runaways, two academies, four real estate offers, three races, one stud, and nine legal notices; these advertisements came from as far away as Johnston County to the east and Randolph County to the west. But local advertising was on the increase, and in the *Register* of September 29, 1820, out of seven columns of advertisements, nearly five were of Raleigh firms and individuals. Four years later the following Raleigh firms advertised regularly in the *Register*: John F. Goneke, confectionery store; Wesley Whitaker, carriage maker; J. Gales, book store; Augur Pixley, harness maker; P. Foley, clothing; H. Relay, millinery and fancy goods; the Raleigh Theatre; William T. Richard's dancing school; William S. McEwen and Company, shoes; J. Marling, portraits and miniatures; C. J. Tooker, cabinet maker; Randolph Webb, medicines; J. W. Dimock and Company, clothing; Hazlett and Robert Kyle, dry goods; and Henry Hardie, confectioner.[38]

As the years wore on many firms were established in Raleigh; some lasted but a short time, others combined, while a number became important leaders in Raleigh's commercial life. In the *Register* of September 15, 1835, Turner and Hughes, trading under the name of The North Carolina Bookstore, was a prominent advertiser. In 1862 the North Carolina Bookstore, now owned by H. D. Turner, was still a leading advertiser. This establishment apparently enjoyed a first rate reputation. Visitors to Raleigh were quoted in the *Register* as saying that few book shelves in the South were better filled than those of the North

[37] Raleigh *Register,* June 7, 28, 1836; November 13, 1847; November 12, 1851.
[38] Raleigh *Register,* November 23, 1824.

Carolina Bookstore.[39] The stock listed showed an excellent selection of classical and general literature from both English and American publishers. The store provided a reading room where newspapers and periodicals were available. Charges for its use were $5 a year or 25c a week.[40] In January, 1851, Seaton Gales began to publish in the *Register* a feature called "Literary Notices" where he reviewed current books and usually concluded by stating that the books were available at the North Carolina Bookstore. Besides Turner's North Carolina Bookstore, other longtime advertisers in the *Register* were: Williams, Haywood and Company, druggists; Bernard Dupuy, jeweler and watchmaker; Oliver and Procter, tailors; P. F. Pescud, druggist; C. B. Root, jeweler and musical instrument merchant; E. L. Harding, dry goods and clothing merchant; R. Tucker and Sons, dry goods and general merchandise; Will Peck and Son, hardware; Joseph Woltering, gunsmith, blacksmith, locksmith, and machine shop; and K. W. Petersilla, music store.

With from one third to one half of its columns filled with advertising the *Register* gave its readers a fairly complete coverage of the commercial scene in Raleigh. Farmers were advised of commodities available in Raleigh. At the same time, the *Register* apprised them of the prices prevailing not only in the Raleigh market but elsewhere. In the *Register* of November 27, 1837, Weston Gales announced that several Raleigh merchants were buying cotton, an innovation for Raleigh, and offering a fair price. This sort of enterprise increased with the opening of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad in 1840. Several Petersburg brokers also established agents in Raleigh. Beginning with the issue of January 21, 1840, the *Register* ran a regular market report listing the prices offered in Petersburg for cotton, corn, wheat, and other commodities. This was no new service, for in 1802, 1805, and 1823 the *Register* had reported markets in Petersburg, Richmond, Wilmington, Fayetteville, Newbern, and Charleston, giving the current prices offered for tobacco, cotton, flour, wheat, corn, and bacon.[41] However, from lack of a staff or adequate communication these efforts were short-lived, and the report from Petersburg was no exception. Special items wanted by Raleigh firms were also made known to out of town readers of the *Register*. For example, in 1846 John J. Krause, a Raleigh snuff manufacturer, advertised for fifty thousand hog bladders,[42] a request which, if supplied, indicated considerable butchering that year. Another feature of some service to Raleigh merchants was begun by Seaton Gales in April, 1850. This was a listing of all arrivals at the two hotels in Raleigh, the Yarborough House and the Union House. Of perhaps greater service was a weather report started by Weston Gales in the *Register* of April 2, 1838, and continued off and on for the next year.

[39] Raleigh *Register,* February 19, 1853. [40] *Ibid.,* September 15, 1835.
[41] Raleigh *Register,* June 8, 1802; November 11, 1805; March 21, 1823.
[42] *Ibid.,* October 23, 1846.

In such fashion did the *Register* cover the local scene. Politics, however, were always of first importance. There were times when the editor had too much news, more than enough "to fill two or three papers instead of one," and it was difficult to select what should be published, but this news consisted of speeches, reports of the legislature, and the like; it was a rare occasion when the editor quibbled over omitting a local news item or, sometimes, even advertisements.[43] There is evidence, however, that the readers often grew tired of the political fare offered and complained to the editor, "give us something besides politics." In times like these, with the elections conveniently over, the editor promised "effusions of every grade of intellect,"[44] but in the *Register,* as in the case of the great majority of newspapers in the United States before the Civil War, politics always dominated.

[43] Raleigh *Register,* December 25, 1846.
[44] *Ibid.,* August 14, 1837.

CHAPTER VIII

IN RETROSPECT

Like men, newspapers acquire a recognized position in the community based in the main on their conduct. By constantly emphasizing issues designed to benefit and advance the community a newspaper is established as an agency concerned with sound issues, studied as they arise and supported with the best interests of the community in view. In this respect the Raleigh *Register* for many years outclassed other North Carolina newspapers. Located at the state capital and for years the spokesman for the official class, it served to unify action and propagandize the policies of the more forward elements in the state. Since no newspaper can subsist for long by publishing sentiments not common to a large number of men, the *Register* must have pleased many, for it survived sixty-four years.

The period during which the *Register* was published was a notable one in the history of journalism. With the beginning of the national government, political parties were formed to represent opposing interests, and to unify and maintain these parties a partisan press arose. Out of this grew the era of personal journalism, a time when each party had as its spokesmen a number of brilliant and devoted editors. Loosely affiliated, these editors spread the party gospel among widely dispersed individuals and welded them into a common activity. The *Register* was established for this purpose and it served the party well. It was a political power, a cog in the machinery of partisan politics.

In the 1830's journalism in the United States underwent a change. In the Northern cities several enterprising newspapermen conceived the idea of a newspaper devoted solely to news and priced so cheap as to make it available to nearly everyone. This was the penny press; its effects were revolutionary. With a wide circulation and generous advertising, these cheap newspapers were independent of party patronage, and, thus divorced from politics, placed emphasis on news. But this revolution had little effect on the *Register*. Partisan editorials and political articles continued to be the main fare offered by the *Register*. Elaborate attention was still given to debates in Congress and in the state legislature. Local news, with the exception of major catastrophes, was shunned as before. Not until the late 1850's did the *Register* supply its readers with anything like an adequate coverage of routine local news

and then it was merely a topical survey readily left out in the press of a heated campaign or an important debate.

Before the advent of the telegraph the people in the provincial areas of America were dependent on the newspaper published in the national or state capital for news of governmental activity in those respective areas. This was true not only of the readers of these newspapers, but it was also true of the publishers of the local weeklies in so many hamlets across the face of the nation. This condition made such papers as the *Register,* located in Raleigh, and the *National Intelligencer,* published in Washington, of special importance. From their columns the people were kept informed of what all parts of the government were doing. At the same time, the *Register* and the *National Intelligencer* through the medium of the exchange kept public officials aware of the state of public intelligence. This was an important function of the press and the *Register* rendered this service well. Joseph Gales was the first reporter in the United States Congress. His shorthand reports of the debates in Congress for Claypool and Dunlop established a precedent for newspapers to follow. Many a brilliant oration delivered in the legislative halls of Washington and Raleigh was saved from oblivion by the accurate reporting of Joseph Gales. He taught the art to his sons Joseph, Jr. and Weston, to his son-in-law William Winston Seaton, and to many apprentices who were trained to the craft in the offices of the *Register* and the *National Intelligencer.* The *Register* pioneered this type of reporting in North Carolina, bringing the scenes in Congress, in the courts, and in the state legislature graphically to the reader. This was an immeasurable service to the voter, the legislator, and the congressman, not to mention the editor of the outlying weekly.

With the invention and extension of the telegraph in the 1840's the favored position occupied by the *Register* and other newspapers located in the capitals of the nation was undermined. This marked the second revolution in journalism, and it followed on the heels of the penny press and independent journalism. To all newspaper editors speed in the transmission of news was of paramount importance; this was especially so with the publishers of the penny press. With the telegraph, news was as close as the nearest office and it could be published simultaneously in all parts of the country. No longer did an editor need to await the arrival of the *Intelligencer* or the *Register* to obtain news of Congress or the state legislature. But the cost of transmitting messages by wire made the verbatum reports of debates prohibitive and this led to summaries, commentaries; gradually the modern type of reporting came in to being.

The effect of the telegraph on journalism was apparent only in the larger cities where there existed newspaper publishers with sufficient capital to exploit the new medium. Most of the provincial press con-

tinued to rely on the exchange carried by the mail. The telegraph reached Raleigh in 1848 and two years later Seaton Gales began a regular feature of bulletins transmitted by wire. But the effect on the character of the *Register* was scarcely noticeable. News still remained of secondary importance. With each election the *Register* became a fiery campaign sheet, glutted with partisan editorials now repetitious and rancorous in the hands of the unskilled Seaton Gales.

The *Register* reacted, then, to the two major revolutions in journalism with hardly a change. Primarily a party paper, it continued to the end devoted to party and published for party purposes.

For most of its long life the *Register* is remarkable for its neatness, taste, and dignity; its pretensions to high breeding and culture. Outside of partisan matters it rarely indulged in personal attack. The well born could be assured of anonymity in connection with any story that might reflect on their character or position. Never was an article published that might offend the sensibilities of any reader. The editorials for the most part were well-pointed, written in a good style, and generously sprinkled with classical allusions. News was presented in a manner free from any vulgarity, and written in a style both baffling and tedious to a modern reader tuned to the terse, objective mode of present reporting.

The strength of the *Register* lay in the party. In all probability the bulk of its subscription list was made up of party members, Republicans during the first half of its existence and Whigs during the latter half. Patronage, gained when the party was in power, contributed a great deal to the *Register's* support. In return, the *Register* ably upheld the party in North Carolina. Readers were afforded political information, and party organizational lines were effected and strengthened, ballots printed and distributed, and campaign material circulated. The importance of the party press is seen in the favored status given newspapers by postal laws which permitted them to be carried by the mails free or at a nominal cost. The press in the ante-bellum period exerted a stronger influence on politics than newspapers today.

The *Register* did much to break down provincialism in North Carolina. No men were more aware of the backward conditions of the state than the editors of the *Register*. They recognized the need for adequate transporation and contributed much toward alleviating this need. In the absence of schools and easy communication the *Register,* with other newspapers, supplied a definite educational force, vital in stimulating expression, in promoting enterprise, and in providing a medium for demanding respect from abroad. The *Register,* with its seniority among the state journals, its long alliance with progressive spirit, and association with men dedicated to advancing the prosperity of the state, deserves special mention in this relation. It did much to educate an interest among the people in the prosperity, enterprise, and independence of their

state. At the outbreak of the Civil War North Carolina was beginning to take its place among the leaders of the union. The 1850's witnessed an outburst of activity; the people were taxing themselves for self-improvement, and an intellectual awakening was experienced. True, this came about under the aegis of the Democratic party, but the ground work had been laid by the Whigs and foremost in its promotion was the Raleigh *Register.*

In relation to the press of North Carolina the *Register* enjoyed seniority. For a great number of years it was the largest in circulation, and for some time it was the only paper published more than once a week. Its location in Raleigh and close connection with the *National Intelligencer* gave it a prior place in the publication of official news. But in many respects the *Register* was challenged by other newspapers. The Raleigh *Star* gave its subscribers a greater variety of reading matter and emphasized local and state news in preference to national or foreign news. The Fayetteville *Observer* and Raleigh *Standard* also contained more local and state news. In politics the *Western Carolinian* at Salisbury led the way in emphasizing state issues over national issues. And, as expected, the Wilmington papers were first in the publication of shipping and commercial news.

Though the *Register* was the first to publish semiweekly, the Wilmington *Commercial* became the first triweekly in 1846. Five years later, September 8, 1851, the Wilmington *Daily Journal* appeared, only a few months after Seaton Gales had suspended the publication of the short-lived *Daily Register.* At the end of ten years there were eight dailies being published in North Carolina, one of which was the *Press* of Raleigh. But the *Register* still remained a semiweekly, along with the *Standard* and the *National Democrat* of Raleigh, the Fayetteville *Observer* and the *Patriot* of Greensboro. One triweekly was being published at Charlotte, the *Bulletin,* which was also issued daily.

In makeup and typography the *Register* differed little from most of the newspapers published in ante-bellum North Carolina. Nearly every editor was also a practical printer or a partner with one, and this was usually a guarantee that the paper would be neatly printed, assuming, of course, that the paper was sufficiently endowed with capital to provide good materials.

No reader of the political press in these years of ante-bellum journalism can help feeling a twinge of regret that these newspapers no longer survive. This was an era when journalism was truly a profession; when editors like Gales and Seaton, Ritchie, Green, Greeley, and, yes, Joseph and Weston Gales, Holden, Hale, and many others addressed their readers with authority; when newspapers had souls and demanded respect and were read for their opinion, quoted and treated with deference, and were treasured and stored to be read and re-read. But

now we have mighty journals worth millions, publishing several editions, circulating widely, and containing matter of every interest; with no opinion or several opinions. In becoming big the newspaper has lost its soul, the editor his individuality. Its pulse is everywhere at once, New York, Paris, London, Moscow; news from everywhere in the world is but a matter of hours away. There is nothing so dead as the morning paper in the evening.

Such the Raleigh *Register* never was. Its soul was sincere devotion to the cause of party principles, its pulse the politics of the state and nation, its editors were advisers who dropped in once or twice a week and disturbed their reader's private affairs but little. The *Register* did not support freedom, it maintained a civilization.

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